



New Chapter

US, Afghan Leaders Lay Groundwork For New Relations

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, left, looks on as Secretary of State John Kerry delivers remarks during a news conference at Camp David Presidential retreat, on Monday, March 23, 2015, in Camp David, Md. The pace of U.S. troop withdrawals from Afghanistan will headline Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's visit to Washington, yet America's exit from the war remains tightly hinged to the abilities of the Afghan forces that face a tough fight against insurgents this spring.

(AP Photo/ Evan Vucci)

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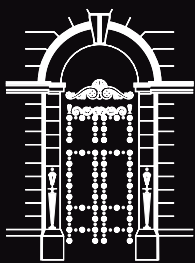
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US, Afghan leaders lay groundwork for new relations

C. BALDOR

Associated Press

CAMP DAVID, Maryland (AP) — U.S. and Afghan leaders laid the groundwork Monday for new relations between the two countries linked for years as war partners, including plans to seek American funding to maintain an Afghan security force of 352,000 and discussions about future U.S. troop levels as the war winds down.

The all-day session, at Camp David in Maryland's bucolic Catoctin mountains, included dozens of U.S. and Afghan officials, including Secretary of State John Kerry, Defense Secretary Ash Carter, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and chief executive Abdullah Abdullah. The talks were aimed at relaunching a U.S.-Afghan relationship strained by nearly 14-years of war and America's often-testy relations with the former president, Hamid Karzai.



Secretary of State John Kerry, center, shares a laugh with from left, Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew, Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani, Kerry, Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, and Defense Secretary Ash Carter after speaking before the start of meeting at the Camp David Presidential retreat, Monday, March 23, 2015, in Camp David, Md.

(AP Photo/ Evan Vucci)

During the meeting, the U.S. agreed to seek funding through 2017 for an Afghan force of 352,000, a level the nation has yet to meet. U.S.

administration officials said the Afghan government is trying to improve recruiting to make up for security forces who leave the

service or simply abandon their jobs.

They also agreed to require the Afghan government to complete specific reforms

and meet other milestones in order to receive up to \$800 million. U.S. officials said the Afghans suggested the incentive-based funding idea. The leaders of the two nations also said they would restart routine ministerial-level Defense and State Department meetings. Ghani is expected to meet with President Barack Obama on Tuesday, a meeting during which officials expect the U.S. to make clear its decision to slow the pace of the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan.

Obama has promised to pull all remaining troops out by the end of his presidency. But deficiencies in the Afghan security forces, heavy casualties in the ranks of the Afghan army and police, a fragile new government and fears that Islamic State fighters could gain a foothold in Afghanistan have combined to persuade Obama to slow the withdrawal. □

US senator: Obama taking risk if Iran deal goes to UN first

DEB RIECHMANN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top Republican senator warned Monday that the White House faces a "violent backlash" in Congress if it takes a nuclear deal with Iran to the United Nations before Congress.

The U.S. and its partners are trying to reach a framework agreement by the end of the month and a final deal by the end of June that would prevent Iran from developing nuclear weap-

ons. In exchange, Tehran seeks relief from economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations, the European Union, the U.S. executive branch as well as Congress. At the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, Sen. Lindsey Graham said that if there is a framework agreement reached by the end of the month, the Senate will vote in April on legislation requiring congressional review of any deal. He predicted the measure will pass in April with enough

votes to override President Barack Obama's veto threat.

The Obama administration doesn't want Congress to take any action until the negotiation is over. Administration officials say that because the U.S. is negotiating with five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, it expects the council will pass a resolution to register its support for any deal.

"That would be met with a violent response in the

Congress," Graham said. "I don't think that's good for the country — to take a deal that could affect world order to an international body before you take it to your own people." Republican Sen. Bob Corker, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, introduced the bipartisan bill to give Congress a vote on any agreement reached. The bill would require the president to submit the text of any agreement to Congress

and would prohibit the administration from waiving any of the congressional sanctions for 60 days. During that time, lawmakers could hold hearings and approve, disagree or take no action on the deal.

Corker, who introduced the measure with Democratic Sens. Bob Menendez and Tim Kaine of Virginia and Graham, already wrote to Obama warning him not to try an end-run around Congress by getting the U.N. to implement any deal. □



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Texas Republican Cruz announces presidential run

STEVEN R. HURST

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Texas

Sen. Ted Cruz, one of the Republican Party's most conservative members, launched his presidential campaign Monday in a crammed auditorium at America's biggest Christian university, becoming the first among what's expected to be a crowded field of White House hopefuls to officially enter the race.

Cruz, 44, touted his family's story as the embodiment of the American dream of overcoming adversity to reach success. He is the child of an American mother and a father who fled Cuba in 1957. When Cruz was three years old, his father left him and his mother in Canada, where he was born. His father, now an evangelical preacher, went back to the United States where he eventually found a deep Christian faith, returned to his wife and child and brought them to the U.S.

Elected to the Senate in 2012, Cruz quickly established himself as an uncompromising conservative willing to take on Democrats and fellow Republicans alike. At times he has been scorned by leading members of his own party, with fellow senator and former



Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, his wife Heidi, and their two daughters Catherine, 4, left, and Caroline, 6, right, wave on stage after he announced his campaign for president, Monday, March 23, 2015, at Liberty University, founded by the late Rev. Jerry Falwell, in Lynchburg, Va. Cruz, who announced his candidacy on twitter in the early morning hours, is the first major candidate in the 2016 race for president.

(AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

presidential candidate John McCain once labeling him a "wacko bird." Cruz's popularity within the right-wing base could give him shine in the primary, a state-by-state process dominated by the most conservative Republican voters. But his tense relationship with the Republican Party establishment complicates his path to the nomination. And if he makes it to the general election, he would have

a hard time winning over moderates and independents. In his speech, the Harvard Law School graduate spoke of the promise of America, saying, "we demand our liberty." And laid out positions antithetical to most Democrats, including the repeal of President Barack Obama's overhaul of the nation's health care system.

Cruz will not be the only official 2016 candidate for long.

Several other Republicans are expected to enter the race in the coming weeks, including former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and two Senate colleagues, Kentucky's Rand Paul and Florida's Marco Rubio.

None is considered a heavy favorite, though Bush, the son and brother of two former presidents, had been getting the most attention in recent weeks as he takes aggressive steps toward

launching his candidacy.

Whoever wins the Republican nomination would likely face former secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton, the front-runner for the Democratic nod who is expected to soon launch her campaign.

Cruz won praise from conservative tea party activists in 2013 for leading a 16-day government shutdown in an unsuccessful drive to repeal the health law, a key achievement of the Obama presidency.

"Imagine in 2017 a new president signing a law the repeals every word of Obamacare," Cruz said to a cheering crowd.

He also called for the abolishment of the tax collecting Internal Revenue Service, a flat tax, making abortion illegal, gun rights, and a host of other issues that put him deep in the conservative wing of the Republican party and its small-government, low-tax tea party wing. On foreign policy, Cruz was among 47 Republican senators who signed a letter to Iran's supreme leader warning that any nuclear deal that is struck with the Obama administration and five other world powers could become null and void after the 2016 election when the current president leaves the White House. □

Clinton previews economic themes of possible 2016 campaign

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton, approaching a likely presidential bid announcement next month, offered a preview Monday of economic themes she is likely to address in a campaign.

Her appearance at the Center for American Progress, a Democratic think tank founded by allies of her husband, former Presi-

dent Bill Clinton, offered no new clues on the timing of her announcement, but plenty of presidential atmospherics. She was joined by Housing Secretary Julian Castro, considered a potential running mate for Clinton by some Democrats, and the heads of a public workers union and teachers union, two of Clinton's most ardent labor al-

lies. Her appearance came as Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, a staunch conservative, seized the day's political headlines by becoming the first candidate to formally enter what is expected to be a crowded race for the Republican Party's 2016 presidential nomination. Clinton, a former secretary of state, is the overwhelming favorite for the Demo-

cratic nod.

At her event, Clinton said income inequality and wage stagnation are problems that go hand-in-hand and the U.S. needs creative solutions to bolster job opportunities and living conditions in the cities.

Clinton cited the benefits of partnerships between the private and public sectors and updated policies to

improve social mobility.

Many Democrats support boosting wages and household income and argue that many families have yet to benefit from an improving job market. Liberals, led most visibly by Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, say the party has become too intertwined with Wall Street and needs bold strategies to address inequality.



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Justices struggle with free speech case over license plates



Texas Solicitor General Scott Keller, attorney for petitioners, speaks to reporters outside the Supreme Court in Washington, Monday, March 23, 2015, after the court heard arguments in *Walker v. Sons of Confederate Vets* case.

(AP Photo/Molly Riley)

ADAM LIPTAK

© 2015 New York Times

WASHINGTON - The question for the Supreme Court on Monday was whether Texas had violated the First Amendment by rejecting a specialty license plate bearing the Confederate battle flag. As the argu-

ment progressed, it became clear that many of the justices were not happy with either possible answer. Only Justice Antonin Scalia seemed attracted to the main argument advanced by the state's solicitor general, Scott A. Keller. Keller said that all 438 specialty

license plates available to Texas drivers, including one promoting a hamburger chain, are the government's speech and thus immune from First Amendment scrutiny. The plates feature universities and sports teams. Some send messages like

"Choose Life," "God Bless Texas" and "Fight Terrorism."

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. was skeptical.

"Texas will put its name on anything," he said. "The only thing that unifies it is they get money from it."

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg focused on the burger shops.

"Is it government speech to say 'Mighty Fine Burgers' to advertise a product?" she asked.

Justice Anthony M. Kennedy said the vast assortment of available license plates suggested that the state should not be allowed to discriminate among potential messages, just as the government may not censor only certain speakers in a public park.

"Why isn't this a new public forum in a new era?" he asked, adding that "people don't go to parks anymore - they drive."

In 2011, the board of the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles rejected a license plate honoring the Sons of

Confederate Veterans and including a Confederate flag.

The board justified its decision by saying that many people found the flag offensive.

"A significant portion of the public," the board explained, "associates the Confederate flag with organizations advocating expressions of hate directed toward people or groups that is demeaning to those people or groups."

Ginsburg seemed troubled by the board's criteria.

"It's a nebulous standard," she said.


Justice Stephen G. Breyer, joined by Kennedy, pressed Keller for the standard the state uses to allow some plates but not others.

"I just think you have to have some kind of legitimate reason," Breyer said. "It doesn't have to be much. It could be just a little."


But neither justice seemed satisfied with Keller's responses, which were vague and abstract. □



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Police: No evidence of gang-rape at University of Virginia



Charlottesville Police Chief Timothy Longo speaks during a news conference Monday, March 23, 2015, in Charlottesville, Va. A five-month police investigation into an alleged gang rape at the University of Virginia that Rolling Stone magazine described in graphic detail produced no evidence of the attack and was stymied by the accuser's unwillingness to cooperate, authorities said Monday.

(AP Photo/Melody Robbins)

LARRY O'DELL
Associated Press
CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia

(AP) — A five-month police investigation into an alleged gang rape at the University of Virginia that Rolling Stone magazine described in graphic detail produced no evidence of the attack and was stymied by the accuser's unwillingness to cooperate, authorities said Monday. The magazine article, titled "A rape on campus," sparked a national conversation about sexual assaults at American universities after it was published last November.

The article focused on a student identified only as "Jackie" who said she was raped at the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity more than two years earlier. It described a hidden culture of sexual violence fueled by binge drinking at the college. Police said they found no evidence of that either. There were numerous discrepancies between the article, published in November 2014, and what investigators found, said Charlottesville Police Chief Timothy Longo, took care not to accuse Jackie of lying.

The case is suspended, not closed, and the fact that investigators could not find evidence years later "doesn't mean that something terrible didn't happen to Jackie," Longo said. He appealed for anyone with information about any sexual violence to immediately alert police, and expressed hope that Jackie may one day feel comfortable explaining what really happened.

"There's a difference between a false allegation and something that happened that may have been different than what was described in that ar-

ticle," Longo said.

Asked if Jackie would be charged with making a false report, he said: "Absolutely not."

Jackie's attorney, Palma Pustilnik, said she would have no comment on the investigation.

Accurate or not, the article heightened scrutiny of campus sexual assaults amid a campaign by President Barack Obama to end them. The University of Virginia had already been on the Department of Education's list of 55 colleges under investigation for their handling of sex assault violations.

Longo said Jackie's first mention of an alleged assault came without key details, during a meeting she had with a dean about an academic issue in May 2013.

The dean brought in police, but the case was dropped because Jackie didn't want them to investigate, Longo said.

In any case, the "sexual act" she described that year was "not consistent with what was described" in the Rolling Stone article. Almost immediately, news organizations found discrepancies that prompted the magazine to print an apology.

University of Virginia President Theresa Sullivan asked police to investigate, and they called Jackie in for another interview. She showed up with a lawyer and again refused to talk. Rolling Stone eventually asked the dean of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism to review its editorial process and the piece by its contributing editor, Sabrina Rubin Erdely. The magazine said Monday that the review's results are "imminent" and would be published soon. □

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US Financial Front:

American home sales rebound slightly in February



A "For Sale" sign pokes out of about 4 feet of snow in the front yard of a home listed in Derry, N.H. The National Association of Realtors released existing home sales for February on Monday, March 23, 2015.

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Slightly more Americans bought homes in February, but tight inventories, affordability problems and nasty winter weather point to sluggish sales in the coming few months.

Sales of existing homes rose 1.2 percent last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.88 million, a slight rebound after plunging in January yet still underperforming by historical standards, the National Association of Realtors said Monday.

The real estate market has hibernated through the first two months of 2015, creating the potential for a second straight year of weak buying activity.

Strong job growth and relatively low mortgage rates have failed to awaken buyers. Meanwhile, relatively few homes are being listed for sale and builders are mostly catering to the wealthiest slivers of the market. Sales are running below last year's pace of 4.93 million, which represented a 3.1 percent drop from 2013.

"The next couple months are some of the most critical of the entire year for housing and sluggish numbers may continue if in-

(AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

ventory doesn't increase," said Bill Banfield, vice president of mortgage provider Quicken Loans.

Despite February's uptick, buying activity appears to have been slow coming into March because of a series of harsh winter storms. The weather last month shut down construction and hurt open houses, likely causing fewer signed contracts and put additional downward pressure on completed sales in March.

"Mother Nature will probably make her presence known more in March," said Jennifer Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets.

Housing starts plunged 17 percent in February, the Commerce Department reported last week. Buyer traffic also slipped last month, according to the National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo index. Mortgage applications slipped in March, according to the Mortgage Bankers Association.

Sales tumbled 6.5 percent last month in the Northeast, which was hammered hard by snow, the Realtors said. Home-buying was unchanged in the Midwest and increased in the South and West.

The recent storms have led

several economists to expect a strong recovery in the coming spring months, when more buyers usually step up their search and sellers decide to list their properties.

Still, some homeowners are trapped by mortgage debt, making it unprofitable for them to sell. Their negative equity is a lingering aftershock from the re-

cession and housing bust, limiting the supply of available homes on the market. The real estate data firm Zillow reported last week that 16.9 percent of homeowners owe more on their mortgage than their homes are worth. In several metro areas including Philadelphia, Houston and Boston, that rate actually increased from the levels in the third

quarter of 2014.

The Realtors reported Monday that just 4.6 months of supply was listed for sale, compared to a full five months a year ago.

That meager inventory has helped push up sales prices, creating additional affordability pressures despite strong monthly job gains averaging more than 200,000 for the past year. □



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Netanyahu apologizes for comments about Israeli Arabs

JODI RUDOREN

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JERUSALEM - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel apologized Monday for warning last week that Arab citizens were voting in "droves," comments that have been denounced by President Barack Obama, other world leaders, U.S. Jewish leaders and many Israelis as anti-democratic, race-baiting and fear-mongering.

"I know that my comments last week offended some Israeli citizens and offended members of the Israeli Arab community," Netanyahu said, according to a translation provided by his party, Likud. The apology came hours after Israel's president, Reuven Rivlin, announced that Netanyahu had secured the backing of 67 of the 120 Parliament members elected

last week and officially designated him to form the next government. Rivlin, whose first months in office have been marked by outreach to Arabs in Israel, was among those who criticized Netanyahu's Election Day statements, saying on Sunday, "Everyone must be careful in their comments, especially those that the entire world hears."

The uproar served as a final act for a divisive, ugly campaign of personal attacks. Midway through last Tuesday's balloting, Netanyahu posted a video on his Facebook page expressing alarm that Arabs were "being bused to the polling stations in droves" by left-wing organizations. Netanyahu said in a series of interviews on Thursday that he did not intend to suppress the Arab vote, as many critics contended, only to inspire Is-



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends a Likud party meeting in Or Yehuda near Tel Aviv, Israel. Netanyahu apologized Monday for warning last week that Arab citizens were voting in "droves," comments that have been denounced by many as anti-democratic, race-baiting and fear-mongering.

(AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

raelis who supported him to get to polling places themselves. But Monday's statement, made to a gathering of Israeli Arabs at the prime minister's residence, was the first hint of an apology.

According to the statement, Netanyahu also told the group: "I view myself as the prime minister of each and every citizen of Israel. Without any prejudice based on religion, ethnicity

or gender, I view every citizen as my partner in building a more secure, more prosperous state of Israel and a nation that benefits the needs and interests of all our citizenry."

The prime minister's original comments regarding Israel's 1.4 million Arab citizens helped fuel the escalating crisis between Netanyahu and the Obama administration, which has said in recent days that it is reassessing its policy of protecting Israel in forums like the United Nations. Obama, in an interview published by The Huffington Post on Saturday, said, "That kind of rhetoric was contrary to what is the best of Israel's traditions," can "give ammunition to folks who don't believe in a Jewish state" and "starts to erode the meaning of democracy in the country." □

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Morocco:

Militants got weapons from Spanish enclave

PAUL SCHEMM

Associated Press

SALE, Morocco (AP) — A militant cell in Morocco linked to the radical Islamic State group obtained its weapons through the Spanish enclave of Melilla, authorities announced on Monday.

Morocco's new Central Bureau of Judicial Investigation on Sunday busted a multi-city militant network aimed at kidnapping military and political figures in this North African country. The bureau's director, Abdelkader Khyam, showed journalists six handguns, ammunition and computers confiscated from the 13 people arrested — most in

the southern coastal town of Agadir.

There are two Spanish cities on Morocco's northern coast, one of which is Melilla, where the weapons had come from.

Spanish and Moroccan police have worked together several times to dismantle networks based out of these cities and the surrounding Moroccan countryside aimed and sending recruits to fight in Syria. Khyam said those arrested hadn't been trained abroad, but "they were in permanent contact with leaders of the Islamic State."

Part of their plan was to attack patrolling soldiers to

acquire better weapons, he added. He claimed they planned to execute those they kidnapped by decapitating or burning them.

Morocco has largely been spared the attacks by extremists against civilian targets elsewhere in the region, such as last week's attack on a Tunisian museum that killed 21. But it has reported dismantling several cells inspired by radical groups.

Like in Tunisia, many young, disaffected Moroccans have sought to travel abroad to join the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq. □



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Yemen FM: President Hadi calls for Gulf military, UN action

AHMED AL-HAJ
Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen (AP) — Yemen's embattled President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi has asked Gulf countries to intervene militarily against Shiite rebels who have seized the capital and are advancing toward his new base in the south, his foreign minister told Saudi media Monday. Riad Yassin said Hadi has also asked the United Nations to impose a no-fly zone so that the rebels, known as Houthis, cannot use the airports they seized. He accused the rebels of being a proxy of Shiite Iran, charges they deny. Yassin spoke to Saudi-owned Al-Hadath TV on Monday. He made similar comments to the Saudi-owned Asharq al-Awsat newspaper. Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal meanwhile warned that "if the Houthi coup does not end peacefully, we will take the

necessary measures for this crisis to protect the region." He did not elaborate further. Riyadh also renewed its offer to host talks between Yemen's rival groups— which has already been rejected by the rebels. The six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council -- Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Bahrain -- warned earlier this year that they would act to protect the Arabian Peninsula's security and described the Houthi takeover of parts of Yemen as a "terrorist" act. "Time is not on our side," Yassin told Al-Hadath. He didn't say what Gulf military intervention would entail but said the Houthis' advance toward Hadi's base in the southern city of Aden must be stopped. He said the rebels want to foil attempts to reach a political solution. Yassin said the request was made to the Gulf



Supporters of Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, the son of Yemeni former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, hold their weapons as they chant slogans during a demonstration demanding presidential elections be held and the younger Saleh run for the office, in Sanaa, Yemen.

(AP Photo/Hani Mohammed)

Cooperation Council after warplanes struck near the presidential palace in Aden over the weekend. Hadi was not harmed in the attack. The Gulf countries' emergency military force, known as the Peninsula Shield, intervened in Bah-

rain in 2011 to help the Sunni monarchy crush protests backed by the Shiite majority. The call for intervention comes days ahead of an Arab Summit in Egypt. It's unclear whether Hadi will be able to leave Yemen in order to attend.

Saudi Arabia last intervened in Yemen in late 2009 and early 2010, launching airstrikes and artillery rounds against Houthis near its border, following a cross border attack against its soldiers. More than 130 Saudi soldiers were killed. □



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France swings to the right as EU retrenches

**ANGELA CHARLTON
SYLVIE CORBET**
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France, long the land of the left, is making a right turn.

The top two parties in weekend local elections were the conservative UMP and the far right National Front. And even the governing Socialists are adopting traditionally right-wing policies: reducing labor protections, expelling immigrants and rounding up trouble-makers.

The election result is the latest sign of a long-running change in attitudes, as many Europeans shift amid economic uncertainty and security fears. That, along with disillusionment with mainstream leaders, is pushing voters in new directions, from Greece to Spain and Britain.

In France, surging support for the National Front has forced mainstream conservatives and leftists to consider ideas that once seemed authoritarian. And a deadly rampage in January by French Islamic extremists is swaying the conversation about security, immigration and integration.

"What seems most striking to me is the bar swinging to the right on the political chess board," said Frederic Dabi of France's Ifop polling agency.

That's in part because of shrinking support for Europe's open borders and shared currency, which far right groups decry. But Dabi said it's also because voters from all political backgrounds want to punish the party in charge.

In the voting Sunday for local councils in France, former President Nicolas Sarkozy's conservative UMP and its allies won 29 per-

cent of votes in first-round balloting. Next came Marine Le Pen's National Front, with 25 percent. President Francois Hollande's governing Socialists and their allies trailed with 21.5 per-

elections instead — in part because they have increasingly been borrowing from the far right playbook to win votes.

Under Sarkozy's presidency, authorities expelled



French President Francois Hollande, right, and former French President Nicolas Sarkozy speak on the steps of the Elysee Palace, Paris. France, long the land of the left, is making a right turn. In voting Sunday for local councils in France, Sarkozy's conservative UMP and its allies won 29 percent of votes in first-round balloting.

(AP Photo/Thibault Camus)

cent, according to official results.

That means that in about a quarter of runoff races March 29, voters will have a choice between the right and the hard right.

It's a wake-up call for the French left, which boasts several political parties and whose defense of worker rights and the welfare state long set the overall national agenda. It's bleeding support amid Hollande's failure to create jobs and reinvigorate the economy. Many even expected the National Front to come out on top in Sunday's vote, since its support has steadily surged over recent years under Le Pen. With her eye on a 2017 presidential bid, she wants to close France's borders and rails against the "Islamization" of Europe.

Sarkozy's conservatives dominated the Sunday

tens of thousands of immigrants annually. Hollande's Socialist administration has kept up the rhythm, expelling about the same number each year as under Sarkozy.

The French Parliament's vote in January to extend airstrikes against extremists in Iraq was telling: The Socialist-led National Assembly gave Prime Minister Manuel Valls a standing ovation when he declared "war" on terrorists, and approved the extension by 488-1. After the January attacks, Hollande's administration deployed more than 100,000 security forces, and authorities rounded up dozens in a crackdown on hate speech. The government is now pushing to legalize broad surveillance of terrorism suspects, a move activists consider a major blow to France's famed "liberte." □

Greek and German leaders seek to reboot relationship

**DAVID RISING
GEIR MOULSON**
Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and German Chancellor Angela Merkel sought Monday to reboot an increasingly sour relationship, saying they are looking for ways to help Athens reach a deal with creditors that will keep it from falling out of the euro. In his first visit to Germany since coming to power in January, Tsipras sounded a conciliatory note — though he stopped short of promising anything concrete on reforms that creditors like Germany want to see before they pay more money.

Greece urgently needs more funds as it faces a cash crunch within weeks. Backtracking on some of his previously fiery rhetoric blaming Greece's problems on German insistence on budget austerity measures, Tsipras said he wanted to "break the stereotypes that have grown in the past five years: The Greeks are not lazy and the Germans are not to blame for everything."

Tsipras said Merkel invited him to Berlin for talks as the tensions between the two countries increased, telling him "it is better to talk with one another than about one another."

"I did not come here to ask for financial help," Tsipras told reporters after meeting with Merkel behind closed doors for more than an hour. "I came for an exchange of our thoughts and opinions, to see where there is common ground and where there is disagreement."

He characterized the talks as "positive," saying he found Merkel "listens and wants to be constructive

in the exchange of opinions."

Merkel was careful to point out Germany was only one of the eurozone nations that would be responsible for deciding whether Greece's reforms are sufficient, and said no decisions had been made in her talks with Tsipras.

"Today we can only talk about things," she said, characterizing the meetings as being held in "a spirit of trust."

The two were to continue their discussions over dinner following the press briefing.

Tsipras' first weeks in office have been marked by tensions between the two governments' contrasting approaches to Greece's debt crisis and over Athens' revival of calls for World War II reparations from Berlin.

Tsipras brought reparations up as he spoke alongside Merkel, but said "there is no linkage at all with the financial crisis and the eurozone crisis — it is clearly a bilateral issue."

"This is primarily a moral issue and I believe that we have to work together, our two countries, to address this moral issue," he said.

Merkel stuck to her government's contention that "the question of reparations has been politically and legally settled" with a 1960 accord with Greece and a payment at that time. But she noted Germany has earmarked 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) annually for a "German-Greek future foundation" meant to fund remembrance and historical research projects, and "in this spirit we will talk with the Greek government further." □



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Argentine archeologists investigate possible Nazi hideout

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Archaeologists say abandoned buildings found in an Argentine nature reserve may have been planned as a potential hideout for top Nazi officers. German coins dating to the 1940s were found at the remote site in Misiones province, some 680 miles north of Buenos Aires. Daniel Schavelzon directs the urban archaeology center at Buenos Aires University and heads

the team researching the site. He told The Associated Press the buildings evidently were designed as a hideout, but "the Nazis never lived here because they realized they could live more comfortably, and in hiding, while living in cities." Some local residents say Jesuits constructed the buildings, but Schavelzon says they only date back to the 1940s. In addition to the coins, his team also found pieces of German porcelain. □



This March, 2015 photo released by the University of Buenos Aires Urban Archeology Center shows the remains of a building built inside Teyu Cuare Park near San Ignacio in the northeastern province of Misiones, Argentina. (AP Photo/UBA Urban Archeology Center)

Traffic snarled across Trinidad as police protests block roads

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad (AP) — Police in Trinidad and Tobago on Monday blocked major roadways and paralyzed traffic in the twin-island Caribbean nation amid a salary dispute with the government. Roadblocks forced exasperated motorists to sit in traffic jams for hours. The gridlock kept passengers from reaching the airport, prompting some airlines to delay flights, and forced several businesses and schools to close. Many students were unable to take end-of-term exams. While police are negotiating for higher pay, union officials did not describe the gridlock as a job action. But police welfare association official Roger Alexander implied the police roadblocks would last all day, suggesting that people "walk with your breakfast, lunch and dinner." He told a morning TV program the roadblocks

across the twin-island country were meant to "show the importance of the police on the ground." The islands' national security minister met Monday afternoon in an emergency meeting with leaders of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service to try to ease the impasse. Police are demanding a 14 percent salary hike. It's not clear what the government is offering. Opposition lawmaker Jack Warner urged police to rethink negotiation tactics, saying thousands of law-abiding citizens were being "imprisoned in vehicles that are stranded in the traffic." "The innocent public should be made to pay the price for the dispute between the police and the government," Warner said in a statement. Trinidad and Tobago is the second biggest energy producer in the Caribbean after nearby Venezuela. □

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ARUBA WINE & DINE

Tourists flocking to Cuba 'before the Americans come'

**ANDREA RODRIGUEZ
PETER ORSI**

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Bookings to Cuba jumped 57 percent for one New York tour operator in the weeks after Washington said it would renew ties with Havana. In February, they were up 187 percent; and so far this month, nearly 250 percent.

through Revolution Square. "I wanted to see it before the American world ... but also the modern Western world comes here." Outsiders may romanticize the "time-capsule" nation, but many on the island are ready for change. Where foreigners see charming, historic architecture, bright 1950s-era Amer-

the University of Matanzas who moonlights as a tour guide. It's unlikely Cuba will see major changes overnight. Talks to take the first steps toward normalized relations are just beginning and there is stiff opposition in the U.S. Congress to lifting the 53-year-old embargo that bars most trade with

16 percent increase in visitors in January compared with a year earlier, a total of about 371,000. Tourism, a \$2.6 billion-plus industry, is one of the main engines that has kept Cuba's economy sputtering along. Last year, the country welcomed 3 million visitors, a record. About 600,000 U.S. travelers are estimated to visit Cuba each year, most of them Cuban-Americans visiting family but also tens of thousands coming on approved cultural, religious and educational exchanges. An untold number of others have, for years, skirted travel restrictions by journeying through third countries such as the Bahamas or Mexico. Cuban officials estimate that 1.5 million Americans would travel here annually if all restrictions were removed, supplanting Canada as the No. 1 source of tourism and potentially adding some \$2 billion a year to state coffers. However, the island is hardly ready for a Yankee invasion. Already it strains to accommodate travelers during the December-April high season.

There won't be enough services to accommodate the Americans who will come like rats on a ship."

Privately run B&Bs and diners that have mushroomed under President Raul Castro's economic reforms could help ease the load on the government's 64,000 hotel rooms and bland, poorly stocked restaurants. The recently renovated Havana airport is set to undergo a \$207 million expansion led by Brazilian conglomerate Odebrecht.

Several U.S. airlines have talked of launching service to the island; currently all U.S.-Cuba flights are operated by charter companies. Canada-based Cuba Cruise has begun marketing its sea voyages directly to Americans.

Travel agents that have been doing business here for years are aware that the competition is about to get a lot stiffer. Carlos Javier Rodriguez, head of Argentina-based tour operator Carimar Eventos, expressed hope that Cuba would reserve some quota of capacity for non-U.S. travelers.

"We tour operators," he said, "can say that we view the arrival of American tourism with trepidation."

For now, Rodriguez is busy tending to travelers interested "in experiencing this Cuba, and right away."

Carmenate, the university student and tour guide, dismisses concerns that the island will lose its character. Cubans, he said, eagerly await change but won't allow their country to become the capitalist playground it was before the 1959 revolution.

"It's not going to be that way. Our identity, we will preserve it at all cost," he said. □



Tourists visit the Hamel Alley as a Cuban woman smokes a cigar in the background, in Havana, Cuba, Sunday, March 22, 2015. Tourism to Cuba is up sharply in the months since Washington and Havana announced in December that they would move toward a historic rapprochement.

(AP Photo/Desmond Boylan)

The boom is just one sign that the rush is on to see Cuba now — before, as many predict, McDonald's claims a spot in Old Havana and Starbucks moves in on Cubita, the island's premium coffee brand. The sense that detente will unleash an invasion of Yankee tourists and change the unique character of one of the world's last remaining bastions of communism is shared by many travelers flocking here. "Cuba has a very authentic atmosphere which you see nowhere else in the world," Gay Ben Aharon of Israel said while walking

ican cars and vast stretches of white-sand beaches, locals see decaying buildings in need of repair, new vehicles priced beyond their reach and a lack of economic opportunity. For many Cubans living in dilapidated, multigenerational tenements, change could be good. It may expand access to the Internet and the outside world, creating engagement that could bring brighter economic days and, practically speaking, make it easier to fix a leaky roof. "We're very excited," said Yadiel Carmenate, a 26-year-old English major at

and travel to the island. Still, the December announcement appears to have sparked an influx of tourism. InsightCuba, the tour operator based in New Rochelle, New York, is adding excursions as its monthly bookings explode compared with early 2014. "It's a huge surge," company president Tom Popper said. "Word's gotten out and people are communicating that they want to go before Cuba changes." Already this year, more foreigners are roaming the cobblestoned streets of Old Havana. Cuba saw a



Loyal Visitors Honored at the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort



PALM BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a huge group of loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba at the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort as Distinguished Visitors and Ambassadors of Goodwill! The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for

10-to-19 and 20-to-34 consecutive years. The honorees were Mr. Yury and Mrs. Galina Gugel of Brooklyn New York, Mr. Frank and Mrs. Debra Walsh of Stoneham, Massachusetts, and Mr. Pasco and Mrs. Rita Santilli of Coventry, Rhode Island and their daughter and granddaughters Mrs. Patricia Paolucci, Ms. Elizabeth Paolucci and Ms. Lauren Morehouse.

Pasco and Rita Santilli brought the whole family with them to Aruba to celebrate Pasco's 80th birthday, their children and grandchildren and great granddaughter were all present for the great celebration. All the honorees are loyal members of the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the

weather, the beaches, the restaurants and the casinos. The guests say Aruba feels like a second home where the people are like family to them, and the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort is their 'vacation home-away-from-home.' The certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with a big group of the Santilli Family, Mrs. Avril, Mrs. Pearl Lake and Mr. Gerrit Griffith, GM at the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort. □





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Kitchen Table by White: Fresh, Authentic Island Flavors

PALM BEACH - Island gourmards and vacationers who appreciate fine dining are buzzing about the unique experience of Kitchen Table by White, which opened in Blue Residences this summer. Helmed by Chef Urvin Croes, founder of White Modern Cuisine, Kitchen Table boasts that same attention to detail that made his first venture such a success, along with a vibrant, passionate staff dedicated to the concept of elevating traditional Aruban and Caribbean dishes to the realm of haute cuisine. "Aruba has more than its share of French/Italian/



each dish. Rounding out the Kitchen Table culinary team is Restaurant Manager Carlito Castillo, who thoroughly enjoys sharing his love of fine vintages and has a deft touch at pairing them to perfection. His enthusiasm for the delicate art of enhancing the flavors of both the wine and food with an ideal match is as infectious as his ready smile and congenial charm. He spent ten years in the kitchens of the Royal Caribbean cruise lines, where as a novice to the food service industry he discovered their wine cellars. His passion for the art won him first place among over 1500 employees during a stringent wine



Second in command, Sous Chef Ludovico Henriquez, and the Kitchen Table staff consisting of Claude Werleman, and Moises Ramirez are equally passionate about the concept of food as art. Watching them create the spectacular dishes in the elegant but cozy surroundings is a great part of the evening's entertainment. The multi-course meal is a feast for the eyes as well as the tastebuds; the inventive uses of just-picked regional flowers and herbs such as frangipani, moringa, mata di seda and koko robona are explained, so diners can truly comprehend the careful thought and preparation that goes into



fast food restaurants and steakhouses," observes Chef Urvin, "but I honestly believe that island visitors are looking for a distinctive experience, not something they can have at home any time. During their stay, they wish to savor the authentic flavors of the region, and we have sought out fresh, locally grown ingredients and interpreted traditional island dishes in a manner to surprise and please the most finicky

critic." Urvin and his team are all graduates of Aruba's highly-respected EPI Culinary Institute. He continued his studies at the ROC Gildewaart College, Nieuwegein, then apprenticed at the Brasserie Goeie Luisa, advancing to become their Chef de Partie. Urvin further developed his culinary skills during five years at the famed Michelin 5* rated Grand Restaurant Karel V, perfectly his art

before returning to Aruba to open his own eatery.



testing contest among all the line's culinary staffers. The Kitchen Table by White was recently elected the number ONE restaurant among USA Top 10 Best Aruban and Caribbean restaurants in Aruba. Discover island cuisine elevated to an elegant but intimate dining experience at Kitchen Table. Seating is extremely limited with only 14 reservations accepted nightly and four held for spur-of-the-moment gourmards. Reserve early online via reservations@ktbywhite.com or call: 528-7015. □

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Mike “Gorilla” Ahern wins Aruba Cribbage Tournament

EAGLE BEACH - On March 20, Divi Aruba All Inclusive hosted a cribbage tournament at the Sand Piper Bar. The tournament was dedicated to the Eileen Ahern Memorial. A total of 12 players participated. Mike “Gorilla” Ahern, Frank “Buzzy” Ahern, Kevin “Angel” Ahern, Joe “Bags” Maltacea, Bob “Pants” Pannetone, Allan “Wajaba” Lowrence, Ann Pannetone, Tom Bemis, Carol Bemis, Brian Gordon, Katie Gordon

and Kristina O’Connell. The winner of the Eileen Ahern Memorial ARUBA Cribbage Tournament of Champions 2015 without losing a game was Mike “Gorilla” Ahern. 2nd place was Bob “Pants” Pannetone, 3rd place was Kevin “Angel” Ahern, 4th place was Joe “bags” Maltacea who was the champion last year. Nelson “Snor” congratulated Mike “Gorilla” Ahern with his birthday Saturday, March 21. □



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Mar (pool deck), Playa Linda resort next to the juice bar, Holiday Inn Desk and at the Concierge & Pelican Pier desk located between Holiday Inn hotel & Playa Linda Resort. Pelican Nest Restaurant offers an impressive selection

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extended menu has been jubled by many. Driftwood offers daily specials, as well as a delicious 4-course menu for just \$25.95 **Charter deep sea fishing rates:** \$400 - 1/2 day • \$760 - full day. Rates per boat Max. 6 people. **Driftwood Restaurant** Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant; Klipstraat #12, Downtown Oranjestad. Tel: (297) 583 2515 www.driftwoodaruba.com Open hours: every day, from 5pm till 10:30pm. Sunday Closed.



A 120-foot-tall replica bat fronts the Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory in Louisville, Ky., Monday, March, 23, 2015.

Associated Press

Maker of Louisville Slugger bats selling brand

BRUCE SCHREINER
Associated Press

Over a century of family ownership of Louisville Slugger bats is going ... going ... nearly gone.

The company that makes the iconic bats gripped by generations of ballplayers — from Babe Ruth to David Wright — announced a deal Monday to sell its Louisville Slugger brand to rival Wilson Sporting Goods Co. for \$70 million.

For 131 years, the family behind Hillerich & Bradsby Co. has supplied bats for games from the sandlots to the big leagues.

H&B CEO John A. Hillerich IV said keeping the bat business in family hands had been a dinnertime topic for years. But as the competition's lineup grew in recent years, the family became willing to listen to offers to acquire the brand. "It's always been the family's desire to keep the brand independent and family owned," Hillerich told reporters. "It's worked extremely well for 131 years."

Continued on Page 21

Rory's Road



McIlroy taking memorable road to Augusta

Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, acknowledges the crowd after hitting from the 18th fairway during the final round of the Arnold Palmer Invitational golf tournament in Orlando, Fla., Sunday, March 22, 2015.

Associated Press
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NBA Capsules

Clippers top Pelicans, win streak now 4

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Blake Griffin scored 23 points, Chris Paul had 23 points and 11 assists, and the Los Angeles Clippers put a crimp in the New Orleans Pelicans' playoff hopes with a 107-100 victory on Sunday.

J.J. Redick scored 20 points and DeAndre Jordan finished with 16 rebounds and 12 points, helping the Clippers win their fourth in a row. They converted 18 Pelicans turnovers into 30 points and had a 25-6 advantage on second-chance points.

Anthony Davis led New Orleans with 26 points and 12 rebounds in 39 minutes after missing two games with a sprained left ankle. Tyreke Evans was sidelined because of the same injury and was replaced in the starting lineup by Norris Cole, who had 12 points before fouling out in the final minutes.

THUNDER 93, HEAT 75

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Russell Westbrook had 12 points, 10 rebounds and 17 assists for his 10th triple-double of the season to lead Oklahoma City.

Enes Kanter had 27 points and 12 rebounds for the Thunder, who have won three in a row. Rookie Mitch McGary scored 14 points, and Anthony Morrow had 12.

Kanter was expected to miss his second straight game with an ankle injury. But he was cleared to play after morning shoot-around, and then got off to a fast start with 15 points in the first quarter.

The Heat had five players score in double figures. Hassan Whiteside had 13 points, all in the first half, and Goran Dragic, Dwyane Wade and Mario Chalmers each scored 12.

CAVALIERS 108, BUCKS 90

MILWAUKEE (AP) — LeBron James scored 28 points and sparked a key second-half run with an emphatic dunk to lead the Cavaliers. J.R. Smith added 23 points for Cleveland, which has won three in a row. Smith made three straight 3s to



New Orleans Pelicans' Anthony Davis, right, pressures Los Angeles Clippers' Blake Griffin during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, March 22, 2015, in Los Angeles.
Associated Press

close out the Cavs' decisive run that turned a six-point deficit into a 93-78 lead with 6:19 left in the game.

Milwaukee has dropped six in a row.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 15 points and nine rebounds for the Bucks. The lanky forward muscled his way to the bucket against James early in the game to help Milwaukee build an 11-point lead.

James had his way late. His dunk off an offensive rebound got the Cavs going. He finished 10 of 17 from the field and grabbed 10 boards.

SPURS 114, HAWKS 95

ATLANTA (AP) — Tiago Splitter scored a season-high 23 points, Kawhi Leonard added 20 points and the San Antonio Spurs won their third straight game.

Paul Millsap finished with 22 points and Dennis Schroder had 18 points for Eastern Conference-leading Atlanta, which dropped its third in a row.

Boris Diaw scored 15 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter, and Danny Green added 15 for San Antonio, which never trailed and

took its biggest lead at 26 early in the third.

The Spurs, playing their fourth straight game with key reserve Manu Ginobili nursing a sprained right ankle, contested nearly every Hawks shot and pass, but no Atlanta player looked more flustered than 12th-year guard Kyle Korver.

RAPTORS 106, KNICKS 89

TORONTO (AP) — DeMar DeRozan scored 23 points,

Tyler Hansbrough added a season-high 18 and the Toronto Raptors won for the third time in four games.

Jonas Valanciunas had 17 points and 10 rebounds, Lou Williams scored 13 and Greivis Vasquez had 12.

Lance Thomas scored 24 points and former Raptor Andrea Bargnani had 16 for the Knicks, who dropped their third straight and lost for the 10th time in 12 games.

Toronto point guard Kyle Lowry, who dressed but did not play in Friday's loss at Chicago, was inactive because of a sore back suffered in a fall against Minnesota last Wednesday. Vasquez made his second straight start in Lowry's place.

New York guard Alexey Shved, who came in averaging 22.0 points in his previous three games, suffered bruised ribs in a collision with Toronto's James Johnson in the first half and was unable to return. Shane Larkin replaced Shved to start the third quarter. Shved finished with nine points in 17 minutes.

The Knicks also lost rookie Travis Wear to a sore back in the fourth.

PISTONS 105, CELTICS 97, OT

BOSTON (AP) — Andre Drummond had 18 points and 22 rebounds, Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored seven of his 27 points in

overtime and Detroit beat Boston.

Reggie Jackson added 17 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds for the Pistons, who won for the third time in four games after a 10-game losing streak.

Evan Turner had 23 points and Jae Crowder 19 for Boston, which lost its third straight. The Celtics are in a tight race for the Eastern Conference's eighth and final playoff spot.

Detroit snapped an eight-game road losing streak, sending Boston to just its second home loss in its last 11 games.

The Pistons wiped out a deficit late in regulation, then scored on their first two possessions of overtime and opened with a 7-0 run.

SUNS 98, MAVERICKS 92

PHOENIX (AP) — Archie Goodwin sank the go-ahead 3-pointer, Markieff Morris added a critical jumper in the final 30 seconds and Phoenix beat Dallas.

Dallas rallied from a 17-point, third-quarter deficit and was up 86-80 with 5 minutes to play. But the Mavericks went four minutes without scoring while the Suns climbed back into the lead.

Eric Bledsoe had 20 points, nine assists and six rebounds for the Suns. Morris added 19 points and 13 rebounds. □



In this Oct. 7, 2012 file photo, Lance Armstrong competes in the Rev3 Half Full Triathlon, in Ellicott City, Md.

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The 1987 winner of the Tour de France supports Lance Armstrong

1987 Tour de France winner backs Lance Armstrong charity ride on Tour route

riding part of this July's route to raise funds against blood cancer.

Stephen Roche says "it's for a very good cause" and adds "he hasn't killed anybody."

Former English soccer player Geoff Thomas invited Armstrong on the unofficial charity ride. To raise \$1.5 million, Thomas plans to ride on the Tour route a day before the professional peloton.

Armstrong said he was "honored and humbled" to take part for a couple of days. The head of world cycling, UCI President Brian Cookson, called Armstrong's participation "ill-advised" and "disrespectful to the Tour de France." Armstrong is banned for life from organized sports for doping.

Roche says "it's a charity event. There will be no podium." □

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Not the smoothest road to the Masters for McIlroy

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Rory McIlroy's road to the Masters was memorable for reasons not many would have imagined. He missed the cut at the Honda Classic. He was missing a club at the Cadillac Championship when he flung his 3-iron into a lake. And his highlight at the Arnold Palmer Invitational was eating a banana split after dinner with the King.

"He went into it like it was the last supper," Palmer said.

It wasn't pretty, but there was no reason for McIlroy to panic. He finished off the Florida swing with two birdies on the last three holes for a 2-under 70, eight shots behind Matt Every at Bay Hill. He tied for ninth at Doral, though he was still eight shots behind Dustin Johnson and never really featured on the weekend.

In 10 rounds over three tournaments, he broke 70 only once. Before heading home to South Florida for two weeks of work before the Masters, he was asked if he should be the favorite at Augusta National.

"Given how I've been playing, I guess if you go on form, then probably no," McIlroy said. "But it depends how far you take that for back, and you've got to look at previous results there and all sorts of stuff."

There was no right way to answer the question, so he made an artful escape by adding, "I'm not a bookie."

But he is the favorite.

And there will be loads of pressure on McIlroy. The opportunity is too great.

Not since Lee Trevino in 1991 has a player gone to the Masters with a chance to complete the Grand Slam. Trevino never cared for Augusta National, never seriously contended there and besides, he was 51. McIlroy had a four-shot lead going into the final round in 2011 and shot 80.

He knows he can play there. He's only 25. And he's No. 1 in the world.

Beyond the Grand Slam, he can join Tiger Woods and Ben Hogan as the only players with three straight majors since the Masters began in 1934. Those opportunities don't come along very often, which is why Woods points to the 2000 PGA

It's difficult to measure progress over five tournaments spread across two months, though his win in Dubai and runner-up finish in Abu Dhabi should not be overlooked.

McIlroy said the best golf he was playing going into the Masters was in 2011. He didn't win in five events leading to the Augusta, with a runner-up in

wedges and irons. He's simply not hitting it very close for a reasonable chance at making birdie putts. In a tiny sample size, but McIlroy's average proximity from 125 yards to 150 yards was 30 feet in the Florida swing, or about 10 feet farther away than his 2014 average on the PGA Tour.

The good news for McIlroy is no



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, calls out ahead after hitting his tee shot into the crowd on the 12th hole during the second round of the Arnold Palmer Invitational golf tournament in Orlando, Fla., Friday, March 20, 2015.

Associated Press

Championship (his third straight major) as his most clutch putting performance.

The good news for McIlroy is the buildup to the Masters is over — at least for now.

The first three months of the year were all about Augusta National, and the hype wasn't quite as strong as it could have been. He was asked about it a fair amount, though not enough to consume him. Either way, he was prepared for it.

"I was expecting to get a lot of questions," he said. "It's a big deal what I'm trying to achieve over there."

Abu Dhabi and a tie for 10th in Dubai and Doral. By that measure, this year has been slightly better.

There was a glimpse of impatience early in the Florida swing, particularly at Doral when he had trouble trusting the difficult shots, such as the pull with a 3-iron into the lake, and the club that soon followed the ball into the water. McIlroy managed to turn that into a light-hearted moment. Donald Trump managed to turn that into a three-day news event. And then it was time to move on.

The real culprit has been his

one is talking about a slump. And there's something to be said about not peaking too early.

Woods was going for an unprecedented sweep of the majors in 2001 and there were suggestions of a slump. He went six tournaments without winning (though he was never worse than a tie for 13th). The Masters was approaching. The pressure was building.

And then Woods won Bay Hill, The Players Championship and the Masters. It's all about peaking at the right time.

The Masters starts in 17 days. □

NHL Capsules

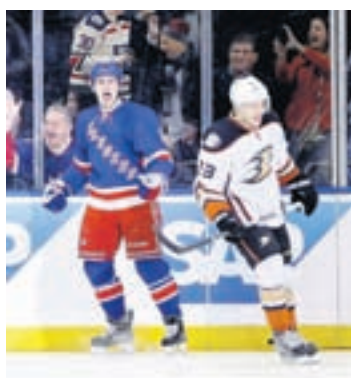
Rangers rout Ducks to go top of standings

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Derek Stepan broke out of a long slump with two goals and an assist, and the New York Rangers caught the Western Conference-leading Anaheim Ducks atop the NHL standings with a 7-2 rout Sunday night.

Stepan, who had no points in his previous 12 games, scored a goal in each of the first two periods as the Rangers found their missing offense while playing the second of back-to-back games. They snapped the Ducks' four-game winning streak as Anaheim (46-21-7) began a five-game trip.

Chris Kreider, Carl Hagelin, J.T. Miller, Jesper Fast and Derick Brassard also scored for New York. The Rangers (46-18-7), Ducks, and Montreal Canadiens all have 99 points, but New York has played fewer games than both.



Anaheim Ducks' Jakob Silfverberg, right, skates away as New York Rangers' Chris Kreider reacts after scoring during the first period of the NHL hockey game, Sunday, March 22, 2015, in New York.

Associated Press

Cam Talbot got off to a rare slow start, allowing two goals to Anaheim's Corey Perry in the first period when the Ducks had 17 shots. He was perfect the rest of the way.

LIGHTNING 5, BRUINS 3

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — J.T. Brown and Anton Stralman scored 15 seconds apart

soon after Tampa Bay captain Steven Stamkos got into a fight, and the Lightning stopped a 10-game losing streak against the Boston Bruins.

Tampa Bay also got goals from Vladislav Namestnikov, Jason Garrison and Ondrej Palat. The Lightning's last win over Boston was on Mar. 13, 2012, a 6-1 victory. Patrice Bergeron, Zdeno Chara and Daniel Paille scored for the Bruins, who are 0-3-2 over their last five games and hold a one-point lead over Ottawa for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot. The Senators have played two fewer games.

Less than a minute after Stamkos fought Boston's Brad Marchand at 10:05 of the first, Brown (10:47) and Stralman (11:02) beat Tuukka Rask to put the Lightning up 3-1.

RED WINGS 2, BLUES 1, OT

DETROIT (AP) — Justin Abdelkader's power-play goal 24 seconds into overtime lifted the Detroit Red Wings over the St. Louis Blues.

The teams reignited their old Western Conference rivalry, accumulating 36 penalty minutes in a third period that included multiple skirmishes on the ice. The Red Wings had a man advantage for the final 1:21 of regulation and the opening moments of overtime. Abdelkader's winner was just the second power-play goal the Blues have allowed in 25 chances over the past seven games.

The Red Wings' Erik Cole tied it at 1 just 24 seconds into the third period. Alexander Steen started the scoring for the Blues with a power-play goal at 9:38 of the second.

CANUCKS 3, COYOTES 1

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Alexander Edler's shot

glanced off the post and bounced off goaltender Mike Smith's back and in with 3:13 left to snap a tie for Vancouver.

A day after a stirring win in Los Angeles, the Canucks had hit the post four previous times while Smith stopped 41 shots in a remarkable performance a day after inadvertently banking a clearance pass off Brandon Sutter's backside and into his own net. But Edler's goal on the power play helped the second-place Canucks move four points ahead of idle Calgary in the Pacific Division. Yannick Weber scored in the first period, and Henrik Sedin added an empty-netter with 1:09 left.

Oliver Ekman-Larsson scored on an end-to-end play when he roofed the second rebound of his own shot in the first period for his 20th goal for Arizona. □



Hyo Joo Kim hits her tee shot on the sixth hole during the third round of the LPGA Tour's JTBC Founders Cup in Phoenix, Saturday, March 21, 2015.

Associated Press

JOHN NICHOLSON

AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Hyo Joo Kim overcame her fear of bees — and beat Stacy Lewis, too.

Forced to hit under a tree with a beehive above her head, the 19-year-old South Korean player birdied five of the next eight holes to outlast Lewis on Sunday in the JTBC Founders Cup.

"I was just scared of the bees and I didn't want to be stung," Kim said through a translator. "So, I kept asking if I can get relief and I kept asking and they said, 'No, you can't.' So, I just swallowed my fears and

tried to play the shot as best I could."

Kim hit back to the fairway, wedged to 10 feet and two-putted for a bogey to drop into a tie for first with Il-hee Lee with eight holes left at Desert Ridge.

The long-hitting Kim birdied the next three holes — making putts of 5, 50 and 3 feet — and finished with a 5-under 67 to beat Lewis by three strokes for her second LPGA Tour title in 13 career starts.

"I think the situation on hole 10 helped," Kim said. "After I went through there and I got a bogey, I just realized there's no time to feel pres-

Hyo Joo Kim wins LPGA Tour's Founders Cup

sure or feel afraid. I just had to go out there and play." The third-ranked Lewis shot a 68. She matched Kim's birdies on Nos. 12, 13 and 15 and pulled within a stroke with a birdie on the par-4 16th.

"The way I played on the front, to think I could still be within a shot coming up those last few holes was pretty amazing," Lewis said. "I'm proud of the way I hung in there. I was in three divots today in the fairway, so that didn't really help things."

Kim made a 10-foot birdie putt on the par-4 18th to finish at 21-under 267. Lewis three-putted for bogey, missing her comebacker from 4 1/2 feet after the outcome was decided.

"In the morning I wasn't concentrating on winning because I was playing with Stacy Lewis and as a rookie, I just felt that by playing with her, I would learn a lot from her," Kim said. "I was just trying to make a good impression as a rookie."

She did.

"She's just really solid," Lewis said. "Kind of had to battle back from some adversity

there on 10. ... Even when I did make some putts, she made the putts to follow and she put a lot of pressure on."

On 18, Kim hit her 140-yard approach pin-high to the right of the difficult pin placed over the large left-side bunker and in front of a rear falloff.

Lewis drove into a sand-filled divot in the fairway, making it nearly impossible to clear the bunker and stop the ball near the pin. She ended up 30 feet away at the back of the green.

"For the lie I had, I hit it a really good shot," Lewis said. Lewis won the 2013 tournament and has 11 LPGA Tour victories. The 30-year-old Texan finished second for the second time this year and the 17th time in her career.

Projected to jump from eighth to fourth in the world, Kim won the Evian last year in France for first major title and has eight victories on the South Korean tour.

Kim is the fifth South Korean winner in the first six events this year — and the other champion, top-ranked Lydia Ko, was born in South

Korea.

Lee shot a 66 to tie for third with Mi Hyang Lee (68) and Pornanong Phatlum (67) at 16 under.

Ko had her third straight 69 to tie for sixth at 15 under. The 17-year-old New Zealander has broken par in her last 24 LPGA Tour rounds and 27 worldwide, a streak that started in the first round of her victory last year in the season-ending event. She won the Women's Australian Open and the Ladies European Tour's New Zealand Women's Open in consecutive weeks this year.

Anna Nordqvist, Austin Ernst, Sei Young Kim and Na Yeon Choi matched Ko at 15 under. Nordqvist, the former Arizona State player from Sweden, had a 64 for the best round of the day.

Alison Lee, the 20-year-old former UCLA player who matched the course record with a 63 on Saturday, had a 74 to tie for 24th at 11 under.

Karrie Webb, the 2011 and 2014 winner, shot a 69 to tie for 34th at 9 under. Michelle Wie tied for 64th at 4 under after a 71. □

Louisville Slugger

Continued from Page 17

"But we've seen things change and we had to make a very tough decision. We'd rather the brand go on and have somebody else own it than potentially put it in jeopardy by keeping it in the family." Hillerich is the great-grand-

Louisville Slugger bats will still carry the brand's recognizable oval logo. Wilson's deal to acquire the global brand, sales and innovation rights of Louisville Slugger still requires approval by H&B shareholders.

"There's so many bats today to choose from that I, for one, would go crazy trying to choose a bat or a company," he said. "I was a Louisville guy. Used them for a long time." About half of all current major league players swing



A Wilson baseball glove and a Louisville slugger bat sit on the field prior to a spring training baseball game between the Kansas City Royals and the San Francisco Giants on Monday, March 23, 2015, in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Associated Press

son of John A. "Bud" Hillerich, who churned out the first Louisville Slugger bat in 1884 for a renowned baseball player in his day, Pete Browning.

Under terms of the agreement, H&B will continue to manufacture Louisville Slugger wood bats at its factory in downtown Louisville, Kentucky.

"The guys down on the floor today are going to be the guys making the bats tomorrow and a year from now and a decade from now," Hillerich said.

But sale of the brand will cost 52 H&B workers their jobs, out of a total workforce numbering about 270, Hillerich said. The remaining employees will work either for H&B or Wilson.

Louisville Slugger will remain an independent brand once the deal is completed, said Mike Dowse, president of Wilson Sporting Goods. That means the

Wilson Sporting Goods is a division of Finnish sports equipment maker Amer Sports Corp. The Helsinki-based company said it expects the deal to be completed in the second quarter.

Former players who now manage major league clubs sounded nostalgic about the age-old brand on Monday.

"I still remember my first Louisville Slugger bat as a kid," Hall of Fame player and current Minnesota Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "All I knew was that Harmon Killebrew used one, and that was good enough for me. Part of the excitement of signing your first pro contract was getting a bat deal with Louisville Slugger."

Former All-Star player Matt Williams, who now manages the Washington Nationals, said Louisville Slugger bats were popular among players of his generation.

Louisville Slugger bats, according to H&B. The company said it has churned out more than 100 million bats in its history, including aluminum and composite bats.

The sale includes the brand's aluminum and composite bats, as well as Louisville Slugger lines of fielding and batting gloves, protective gear and equipment bags.

Louisville Slugger's wood bats are formed mostly out of northern white ash or maple, but a small percentage is made out of birch.

The timber comes from forests in New York and Pennsylvania.

H&B will maintain ownership and continue to operate the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory and Gift Shop, a popular tourist destination. Towering outside the museum and factory is a 120-foot-tall steel bat that looms as a landmark in

downtown Louisville. H&B's Bionic Gloves division and Powerbilt golf brand are not part of the deal, it said.

Dowse said expanding Wilson's baseball and softball business globally is a key part of its business strategy. Wilson sees strong growth potential for Louisville Slugger, he said. He noted sales for DeMarini bats have quadrupled since Wilson acquired the brand about 15 years ago.

"We see that same strategy and formula working extremely well for us at the Louisville brand," he said.

Wilson currently manufactures and sells gloves, bats, uniforms, apparel, protective gear, accessories and player development equipment and training tools through its Wilson, DeMarini and ATEC brands. Like its DeMarini brand, Wilson will market and sell Louisville Slugger as a stand-alone brand. □

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FRI 4:35 | 7:05 | 9:35 | 12:05
SAT 2:05 | 4:35 | 7:05 | 9:35 | 12:05
SUN & HOL 2:05 | 4:35 | 7:05 | 9:35

INSURGENT
SHAILENE WOODLEY | ANSEL ELGORT
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
3D VERSION
MON-THURS 4:25 | 9:30
FRI-SAT 4:25 | 9:30 | 12:05
SUN & HOL 4:25 | 9:30
2D VERSION
MON-THURS 6:55 | 9:00
FRI 6:55 | 9:00 | 11:35
SAT 1:55 | 6:55 | 9:00 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 1:55 | 6:55 | 9:00

ALSO SHOWING!

CINDERELLA
LILY JAMES | CATE BLANCHETT
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 4:00 | 6:25 | 7:40 | 8:55
FRI 4:00 | 6:25 | 7:40 | 8:55 | 11:25
SAT 2:15 | 4:00 | 6:25 | 7:40 | 8:55 | 11:25
SUN & HOL 2:15 | 4:00 | 6:25 | 7:40 | 8:55
SPANISH
MON-THURS 5:10
FRI 5:10 | 10:10
SAT 2:40 | 5:10 | 10:10
SUN & HOL 2:40 | 5:10

RUN ALL NIGHT
LIAM NEESON | ED HARRIS
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 4:35 | 7:00 | 9:25
FRI 4:35 | 7:00 | 9:25 | 11:50
SAT 2:10 | 4:35 | 7:00 | 9:25 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:10 | 4:35 | 7:00 | 9:25

MARIGOLD HOTEL
THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 3:55 | 6:30
FRI-SAT 3:55 | 6:30
SUN & HOL 3:55 | 6:30

f o c u s
WILL SMITH | MARGOT ROBBIE
WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES
MON-THURS 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30
FRI 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SAT 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
VINCE VAUGHN | DAVE FRANCO
MON-THURS 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35
FRI 5:35 | 7:35 | 9:35 | 11:35
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AP Interview: Olympic swimmer Missy Franklin turns pro

BETH HARRIS

AP Sports Writer

Missy Franklin has bid farewell to college swimming and is turning pro.

The four-time Olympic gold medalist went out with a bang, winning three individual events and helping her California team win the NCAA championship last weekend.

Now, Franklin can start competing for money and endorsement deals, and she's signed with a sports agent connected to Hollywood.

Franklin told The Associated Press in a phone interview that she's chosen Mark Ervin of WME-IMG to represent her. She will be the first swimmer in his client stable that includes Olympic champion skier Lindsey Vonn. Ervin used to work with Olympic snowboarder Shaun White.

"I am so confident in my choice," she said. "I felt this incredible connection with him. I feel like 100 percent we stand for the same things."

The swimmer, who turns 20 in May, had help in making the decision. Her parents vetted a slew of potential representatives and narrowed down the field, allowing Franklin to enjoy her second — and last — year as a collegiate athlete.

"There's no one that knows me better than my parents," said Franklin, an only

child.

WME-IMG is based in Beverly Hills, California, and some of its other athletes include tennis player Maria

create a platform where I can inspire, reach out and help and encourage. Being a pro athlete gives me a lot of opportunities."

swam on the winning 800 free relay and the second-place 400 free relay while helping the Cal Golden Bears win the NCAA cham-

to continue taking a few classes while she intensifies training for this summer's world championships in Russia and next year's Olympics.

"I love learning. If I just had swimming I might go insane," she said, laughing. "Going into these next 13-14 months, swimming needs to be pretty high on my priority list."

Franklin has yet to decide where she will base her training leading up to the Rio Games. Once she returns to the Berkeley campus in a week, she'll sit down with college coach Teri McKeever and make a plan. Among her options are training with her former college teammates under McKeever or returning to longtime coach Todd Schmitz in Colorado, where Franklin is from.

Franklin's goal is to keep swimming for "a long, long time," calling the sport her passion that she wants to share with the world.

Even though she can start cashing in on her fame and achievements, little has changed for the up-beat teenager.

"What's still special about it is I get to still stay me," Franklin said. "Just because this one chapter is ending, I'm still going to be dancing every time I get behind the blocks to race. I'm going to stay true to myself." □



In this Feb. 15, 2015, file photo, Olympic swimming gold medalist Missy Franklin gestures during a news conference in Berkeley, Calif. Associated Press

Sharapova and NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick. Besides sports, the mega-agency has ties to entertainment, fashion and event management.

"This is a new chapter of my life," Franklin told the AP. "The most important thing about this transition is I'm going to be able to reach more people. I can

After winning four golds at the 2012 London Olympics, Franklin left millions of dollars on the table and announced she would swim for two years at Cal. She closed out her career by winning NCAA titles in the 200-yard individual medley, 200 backstroke and 200 freestyle last weekend in North Carolina. She

pionship.

"I felt it was just written in the stars with the way everything happened," she said by phone from New York. "It meant so much to me and I think everyone knows that. It was the perfect way to end it."

Franklin isn't giving up on college yet. She'll finish out the school year and hopes



Rafael Nadal, of Spain, leaves the court after losing to Milos Raonic, of Canada, at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament, Friday, March 20, 2015 in Indian Wells, Calif. Raonic won, 4-6, 7-6 (10), 7-5.

Associated Press

Nadal to play at Queen's Club ending three-year absence

LONDON (AP) — Rafael Nadal says he will play at this year's Queen's Club, ending his three-year absence at the grass-court tournament.

Nadal, who lifted the trophy in 2008, has gone on to reach the Wimbledon final following every appearance at the event that is traditionally seen as a warm-up to the SW19 championships.

"I always loved playing at The Queen's Club and I am very happy that I will be back this year," Nadal said.

"It was a great experience for me

to lift the trophy in 2008 because it is such an important and traditional tournament. To win Wimbledon a few weeks later was like a dream."

The 28-year-old Nadal will be joined by the defending champion Grigor Dimitrov, US Open winner Marin Cilic, 2014 Australian Open victor Stan Wawrinka and World No.4 Andy Murray in this year's draw.

"Coming helps with the adjustment from clay to grass because the grass courts at Queen's are so good," Nadal added. □

Expert: Silicon Valley bias suit spurs closer look by firms

By SUDHIN THANAWALA
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) -- A sex discrimination trial that has put a spotlight on gender imbalance in Silicon Valley has prompted some technology and venture capital companies to re-examine their cultures and practices - even before a jury reaches its verdict.

As jurors get ready to hear closing arguments in Ellen Pao's lawsuit against the venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, other companies have been contacting consultants about possible obstacles to women being hired and advancing.

A verdict against Kleiner Perkins would likely accelerate that trend, the consultants say.

Consultant Freada Kapor Klein said she has been contacted by more than a dozen venture capital and technology companies asking her how they can



In this Feb. 24, 2015, file photo, Ellen Pao, right, leaves the Civic Center Courthouse along with her attorney, Therese Lawless, left, during a lunch break in her trial in San Francisco.

Associated Press

improve the environment for women. Klein, whose firm specializes in addressing bias in the workplace, declined to name the firms but said they approached her as a result of the Pao case.

"People understand that the issues raised in this trial are about company culture in general," Klein said. Closing arguments are expected Tuesday in the Pao case, with a jury then deciding if Kleiner Perkins discriminated against Pao and later retaliated when she complained.

A judge ruled over the weekend that Pao can seek punitive damages that could add millions of dollars to a possible verdict in her favor. She is seeking \$16 million in lost wages

and bonuses.

Experts say Pao's case has increased awareness about seemingly small indignities faced by women in the technology and venture capital sectors.

"These subtle incidents individually seem trivial, but cumulatively create a climate that is unwelcoming," said Deborah Rhode, a law professor at Stanford University who teaches gender equity law.

Pao's attorneys have portrayed her as the victim of a male-dominated culture at Kleiner Perkins, where she was excluded from an all-male dinner at the home of Vice President Al Gore; asked to take notes like a secretary at a meeting; and subjected to talk about pornography

aboard a private plane.

When she complained, she said, the firm hired a biased investigator who dismissed her allegations. When she sued, she said the firm fired her in 2012.

Kleiner Perkins has countered that Pao was a chronic complainer who twisted facts and circumstances in her lawsuit and had a history of conflicts with colleagues that contributed to the decision to let her go. She also didn't cut it when her job shifted to mostly investing in 2010, they say.

During the trial, Pao and officials with Kleiner Perkins addressed the larger issue of gender inequities in the venture capital sector,

where women are grossly underrepresented.

Pao told jurors that her lawsuit was intended in part to create equal opportunities for women in the venture capital sector.

Paul Gompers, a Harvard business school professor, was hired by Kleiner Perkins to conduct research about the venture capital industry. He testified that Kleiner Perkins placed more women on the boards of companies in which it invested than any of the 3,000 venture capital firms that he reviewed.

However, a study released last year by Babson College in Massachusetts found that women filled just 6 percent of partner-level positions at 139 venture capital firms in 2013, down from 10 percent in 1999.

Technology and venture capital firms have become more open over the past two years about discussing gender and racial inequities, said Nicole Sanchez, founder of Vaya Consulting, which tries to help Silicon Valley companies increase diversity.

Sanchez said that's due in part to a decision by Google and other technology giants to release data about the demographic makeup of their workforces. The numbers weren't good - women hold just 15 to 20 percent of tech jobs at Google, Apple, Facebook and Yahoo. □

Instagram introduces new app for photo collages

NEW YORK (AP) — Instagram's latest stand-alone app, released Monday, lets users combine multiple photos and post them as a single image.

Called Layout, it is the second app that Facebook-owned Instagram has released. Last August, it came out with Hyperlapse, which lets users create time-lapse videos to share on Instagram.

Layout lets users choose custom layouts for photo collages, rearranging the images and adjusting their size and shape. A feature called Faces shows users all the photos in their camera that feature people. Another tool, called Photo Booth, works like a real-life photo booth, counting down to capture photos instantly. □

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Chinese state chemical company agrees to buy Italy's Pirelli

JOE McDONALD
AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China's biggest state-owned chemical company said Monday it plans to buy Italian tire manufacturer Pirelli, adding to a string of high-profile Chinese corporate purchases in Europe. ChemChina said it has agreed to buy a 26.2 percent stake in Pirelli Tyre S.p.A. from its biggest shareholder, Camfin S.p.A., which is controlled by the

family of Pirelli chairman Marco Tronchetti Provera. The company said it would offer to buy the remaining outstanding shares. Flush with cash from their country's boom, Chinese companies are stepping up acquisitions abroad as they diversify beyond their own economy, where growth is slowing. Europe is seen as an attractive market for potential purchases due to the relative weakness of the euro right now and

what Chinese companies see as less political resistance to large deals there than they might face in the United States. ChemChina, also known as China National Chemical Corp., is one of China's biggest industrial companies, with businesses in petrochemicals, oil processing, agricultural chemicals, rubber products and chemical equipment. The Beijing-based company, which has its own tire manufactur-

ing operation, said it would support the growth and expansion of Pirelli, the world's fifth-largest tire supplier. Camfin said the deal would enable Pirelli to double its volume and may result in the de-listing of Pirelli from the Milan stock exchange. In a statement, Camfin said Tronchetti Provera would remain CEO and that Pirelli headquarters would remain in Italy. The deal reflects ChemChina's unusual status as a

state-owned Chinese company that has made ambitious acquisitions abroad outside the finance and natural resources industries. The acquisition of Pirelli, if completed, would be one of China's biggest to date in Europe. So far this year, Chinese companies have announced 27 acquisitions in Europe totaling \$12 billion, more than half of last year's total of \$23.7 billion, according to Dealogic. □

US stock market starts the week with a small loss

MATTHEW CRAFT
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A late turn pulled the stock market to a loss on Monday, as major indexes wavered following a strong run last week.

Kansas City Southern slumped 8 percent, the biggest fall in the Standard & Poor's 500 index, after the railroad operator trimmed its revenue estimates, pointing to falling fuel prices and the strengthening dollar. Its stock lost \$9.21 to \$106.48.

Major indexes started higher in morning trading, settled into an afternoon lull, then dipped down in the last 10 minutes of trading. The S&P 500 fell 3.68 points, or 0.2 percent, to close at 2,104.42.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 11.61 points, or 0.1 percent, to 18,116.04 while the Nasdaq composite slipped 15.44 points, or 0.3 percent, to 5,010.97.

Traders kept tabs on a meeting in Europe between

the leaders of Greece and Germany for signs of progress in Greece's debt negotiations. Greece faces a cash crunch in the coming weeks and is in talks with its European lenders on what steps it must take to receive more loans. Greece's Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, committed to keeping a dialogue open on reforms that would qualify Greece for urgently-needed rescue loans.

Brad McMillan, chief investment officer at Commonwealth Financial, said he expects the market to head higher over the coming months because there appears to be nothing on the horizon capable of knocking it off course. Investors have pushed the S&P 500 to all-time highs despite concerns over Europe's sluggish economy and slumping oil prices.

"Greece hasn't pulled it down, deflation hasn't pulled it down," McMillan said. "Unless the Federal Reserve says it's going to

raise interest rates in June, I just can't see what's going to pull it down."

Last week, the S&P 500 jumped nearly 3 percent, its biggest weekly gain

making moves, Gilead Sciences dropped following reports that the pharmaceutical company told physicians that nine patients taking its hepatitis



Traders Thomas Ferrigno, Justin Flinn, and Brandon Barb, left to right, work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. A late turn pulled the stock market to a loss on Monday, as major indexes wavered following a strong run last week.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

since early February. Investors cheered Wednesday when the Federal Reserve said that it was in no hurry to raise interest rates with inflation low.

Among other companies

C treatments developed slow heartbeats and that one died. Gilead slid \$2.03, or 2 percent, to \$100.26.

Tenet Healthcare surged 5 percent following news that the health care ser-

vices company plans to launch a new hospital venture with a private equity firm. The company's stock gained \$2.45, or 5 percent, to \$52.07.

Major markets in Europe ended mixed. Germany's DAX lost 1.2 percent and France's CAC 40 shed 0.7 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 picked up 0.2 percent.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 finished with a gain of 1 percent. In China, the Shanghai Composite Index surged 2 percent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.5 percent.

Back in the U.S., bond prices inched up, sending yields down. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note slipped to 1.91 percent from 1.93 percent late Friday.

In commodity trading, prices for precious and industrial metals climbed higher. Gold rose \$3.10 to settle at \$1,187.70 an ounce, while silver picked up a penny to \$16.89 an ounce. Copper added 3 cents to \$2.79. □

Humana to dim focus outside insurance with Concentra sale

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Humana plans to sell occupational health care provider Concentra for about \$1.06 billion, as the health insurer refines its focus on providing patient care.

The Louisville, Kentucky, company said Monday it will sell Concentra to a joint venture between specialty hospital operator Select Medical Holdings Corp. and the private equity fund Welsh, Carson, Anderson &

Stowe XII LP. Humana will then use proceeds from the deal to buy back stock.

The insurer bought Concentra in late 2010 for \$790 million in its first broad foray into health care delivery in almost two decades. Concentra, which was privately held when it was purchased, provides occupational health, urgent care and physical therapy services to employers across the country.

Humana bought the company as part of a push to expand care to its members, but CEO Bruce Broussard said Monday in a statement that Concentra's operations didn't align with the insurer's strategy "as well as we had originally anticipated."

The insurer said that primary care businesses like doctor practices and clinics that it has acquired since the Concentra deal are better

suited for Humana's focus. Leerink analyst Ana Gupte said in a research note that the Concentra business didn't fit well with Humana's core Medicare Advantage business. She added that the move was expected after former investment bank executive Brian Kane became Humana's chief financial officer last year, and the insurer's management raised the possibility of selling non-

core business assets. The sale is expected to close during the second quarter.

The health insurer said its 2015 profit outlook remains set at between \$8.50 and \$9 per share. Analysts are expecting \$8.87 a share on average, according to FactSet. Shares in Humana Inc. slipped 47 cents to \$182.32 in afternoon trading, while broader indexes rose slightly. □

Skills in Flux



DAVID BROOKS
© 2015 New York Times

Several years ago, Doug Lemov began studying videos of excellent teachers. He focused not on their big strategies but on their microgestures: How long they waited before calling on students to answer a question (to give the less confident students time to get their hands up); when they paced about the classroom and when they stood still (while issuing instructions, to emphasize the importance of what's being said); how they moved around the room toward a student whose mind might be wandering.

In an excellent piece on Lemov for *The Guardian*, Ian Leslie emphasizes that these subtle skills are often not recognized or even discussed by those who talk about education policy, or even by those who evaluate teachers. Leslie notes that the Los Angeles school system tabulated the performance of roughly 6,000 teachers, using measures of student achievement. The best performing teacher in the whole system was a woman named Zenaida Tan. Up until that report, she was completely unheralded. The skills she possessed were invisible. Meanwhile, less important traits were measured on her evaluations (three times she was late to pick up students from recess). In part, Lemov is talking about the skill of herding cats. The master of cat herding senses when attention is about to wander, knows how fast to move a diverse group, senses the rhythm between lecturing and class participation, varies the emotional tone. This is a performance skill that surely is relevant beyond education.

This raises an important point. As the economy changes, the skills required to thrive in it change, too, and it takes a while before these new skills are defined and acknowledged.

For example, in today's loosely networked world, people with social courage have amazing value. Everyone goes to conferences and meets people, but some people invite six people to lunch afterward and follow up with four carefully tended friendships forevermore. Then they spend their lives connecting people across networks.

People with social courage are extroverted in issuing invitations but introverted in conversation - willing to listen 70 percent of the time. They build not just contacts

but actual friendships by engaging people on multiple levels. If you're interested in a new field, they can reel off the names of 10 people you should know. They develop large informal networks of contacts that transcend their organization and give them an independent power base. They are discriminating in their personal recommendations since character judgment is their primary currency.

Similarly, people who can capture amorphous trends with a clarifying label also have enormous worth. Karl Popper observed that there are clock problems and cloud problems. Clock problems can be divided into parts, but cloud problems are indivisible emergent systems. A culture problem is a cloud, so is a personality, an era and a social environment.

Since it is easier to think deductively, most people try to turn cloud problems into clock problems, but a few people are able to look at a complex situation, grasp the gist and clarify it by naming what is going on.

Such people tend to possess negative capacity, the ability to live with ambiguity and not leap to premature conclusions. They can absorb a stream of disparate data and rest in it until they can synthesize it into one trend, pattern or generalization.

Such people can create a mental model that helps you think about a phenomenon. As Oswald Chambers put it, "The author who benefits you most is not the one who tells you something you did not know before, but the one who gives expression to the truth that has been dumbly struggling in you for utterance."

We can all think of many other skills that are especially valuable right now:

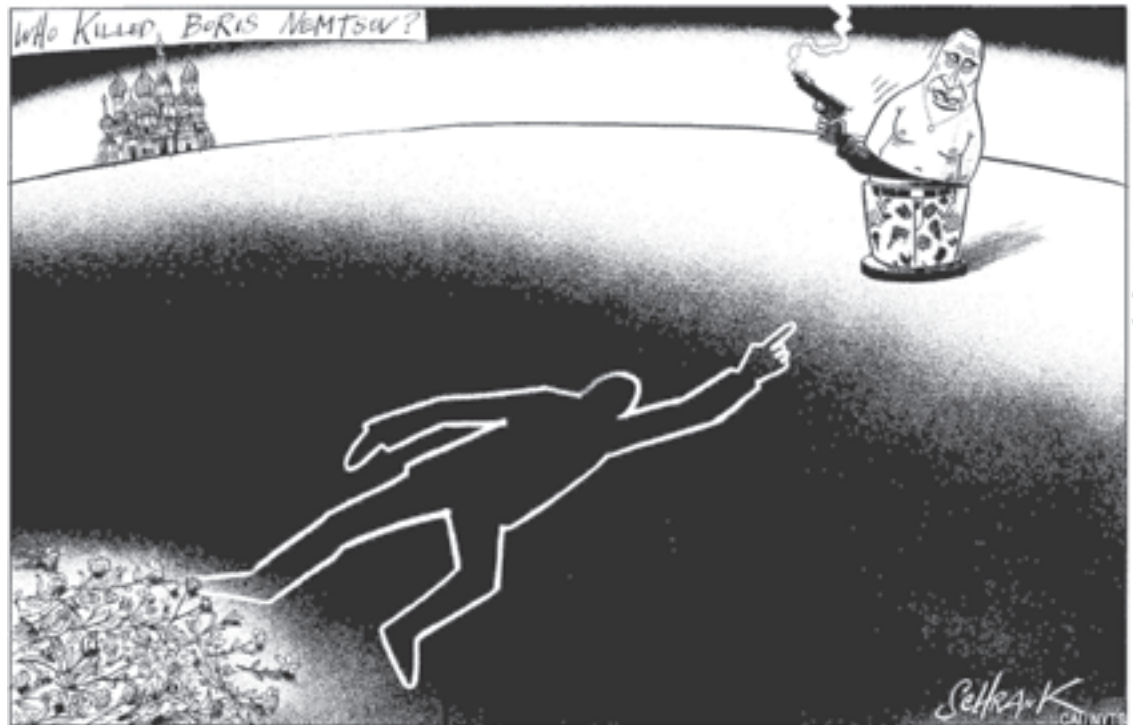
Making nonhuman things intuitive to humans: This is what Steve Jobs did.

Purpose provision: Many people go through life overwhelmed by options, afraid of closing off opportunities. But a few have fully cultivated moral passions and can help others choose the one thing they should dedicate themselves to.

Opposability: F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." For some reason I am continually running across people who believe this is the ability their employees and bosses need right now.

Cross-class expertise: In a world dividing along class, ethnic and economic grounds some people are culturally multilingual. They can operate in an insular social niche while seeing it from the vantage point of an outsider.

One gets the impression we're confronted by a giant cultural lag. The economy emphasizes a new generation of skills, but our vocabulary describes the set required 30 years ago. Lord, if somebody could just identify the skills it takes to give a good briefing these days, that feat alone would deserve the Nobel Prize. □



Oh, No! It's a New Senate Low!



GAIL COLLINS
© 2015 New York Times

The United States Senate is worse than ever.

I know this is hard for you to believe, people. But, really, last week was a new bottom. The Senate found itself unable to pass a bill aiding victims of human trafficking, a practice so terrible that it is one of the few subjects on which members of Congress find it fairly easy to work in bipartisan amity.

"This has got to get done for me to continue having faith in this institution," said Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., who's particularly concerned about sexual exploitation of Native American women. She has always struck me as one of the more cheerful members of the Senate, so this seems like a bad sign.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives has passed 12 bills against human trafficking already this year.

Wow, the House is doing great! If you overlook the introduction of a budget that features terrible math and many assaults on hapless poor people, the lower chamber has been on a roll lately. Speaker John Boehner and Nancy Pelosi, the minority leader, rescued the budget for the Department of Homeland Security, and now they're working out a plan to avoid the next fiscal cliff, which involves keeping Medicare running.

Plus, this week, the Republican majority got rid of disgraced Rep. Aaron Schock, who decorated his office as if it was a scene from "Downton Abbey." In the wake of questions about his mileage reimbursement requests, Schock announced his resignation. Since he had never successfully sponsored any legislation in his six-year congressional career, his greatest legacy may be a reminder that members of the House of Representatives should avoid brightening the workplace with vases of pheasant feathers.

So the House is working on a new fiscal-cliff plan, passed 12 human trafficking bills and subtracted Aaron Schock. Maybe it's going to become the center of bipartisan cooperation the nation has been waiting for!

OK, probably not. Anyway, it's been doing better than the Senate.

At the beginning of the month, the Senate was working on its own anti-trafficking bill, sponsored by Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, with several Democratic co-sponsors. The idea was to fine sexual predators and give the money to groups that help sex-trafficking victims.

Sounded promising. The Senate Judiciary Committee had easily approved Cornyn's bill earlier this year. Then before it reached the floor, someone discovered that it had acquired a clause forbidding the use of the money to provide victims with access to abortions.

"They're putting poison pills in their own bills!" Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in a phone interview.

Before we discuss how badly the Republicans behaved, we need to take time out to note that none of the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee seem to have noticed that somewhere along the line, this change had been inserted in the bill. (One senator acknowledged that an aide knew, but never shared the information.)

It was easy to miss, the Democrats contended, being very oblique and supertinty.

"Out of a 112-page bill, there is this one sentence," complained Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill.

I believe I speak for many Americans when I say that missing a change in important legislation is excusable only if the Senate Judiciary Committee is suffering from a shortage of lawyers.

No one seemed clear on how the new language got there in the first place, but abortion restriction is not something you casually toss into a bill that you want to pass with support from both parties. It would be as if the Democrats had quietly added a stipulation requiring all trafficking victims be barred from carrying a concealed weapon.

Cornyn argued that it made no difference whatsoever because there were plenty of exemptions that would allow any sexually exploited trafficking victim to qualify for an abortion anyway. That was a good point, except for the part where you wondered why he was so insistent that this allegedly meaningless language be preserved at all costs.

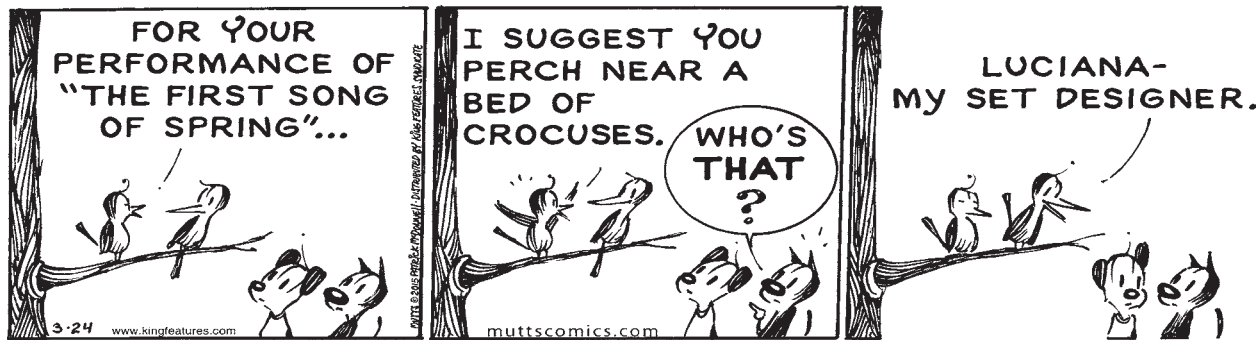
"My wish is that we hadn't junked that bill up with abortion politics," said Sen. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., who has to run for re-election next year. Many Republicans agreed with him, but in public they dug in their heels. In retaliation, the Democrats brought all progress to a halt with a filibuster.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who thought he was going to show how to make the Senate work, was irate, and said there would be no vote on Loretta Lynch, President Barack Obama's attorney general nominee, until Democrats gave in.

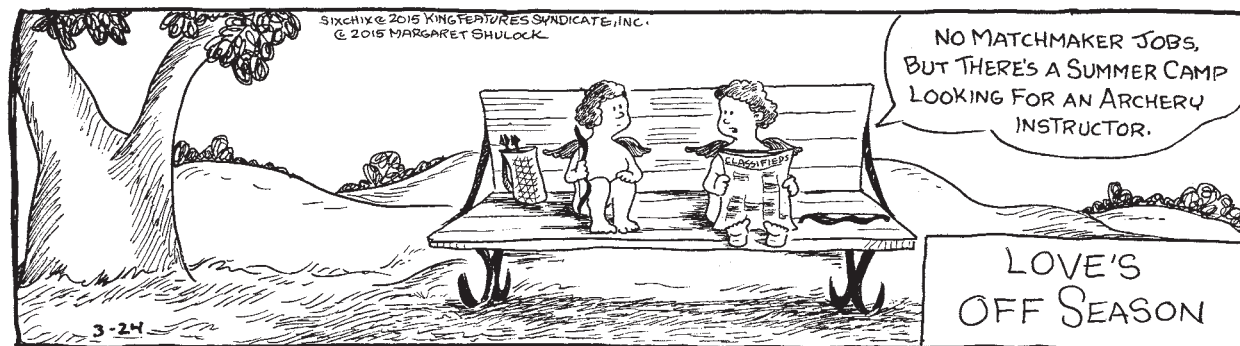
Possible theme for the session: "Republicans who can't lead meet Democrats who can't read."

Lynch did get some support from former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who penned a letter urging Republicans to get behind her. When Giuliani is the most sensible voice in the room, there's not much farther down to go, unless they start bringing in pheasant feathers. □

Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

			6	4			
	2					3	
3			7	2	5		8
2		5				3	1
		1				8	
8		4				6	7
1			2	4	8		6
	9					4	
			1	7			

Difficulty Level ★★

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

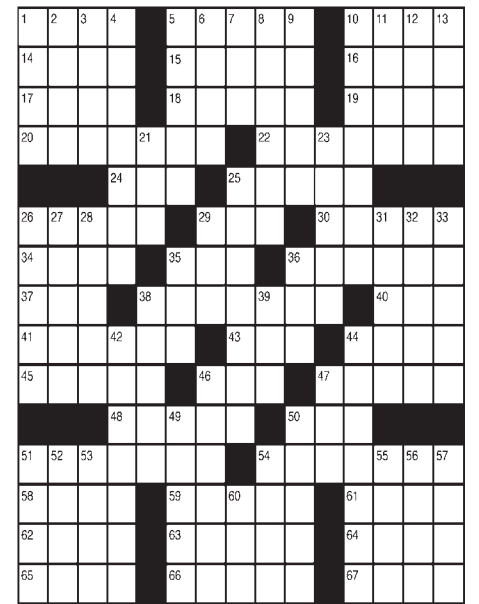
5	2	9	6	3	1	8	4	7
8	1	3	4	9	7	6	5	2
4	7	6	8	5	2	1	3	9
6	5	4	9	1	3	7	2	8
7	9	1	2	8	4	5	6	3
3	8	2	7	6	5	4	9	1
9	4	8	1	2	6	3	7	5
1	3	7	5	4	9	2	8	6
2	6	5	3	7	8	9	1	4

ACROSS

- Actor Alan _
- Fragrance
- Pantry stackables
- Bank's offering
- Speed _; fast driver
- Sandusky's state
- Tap a golf ball
- Intended
- _Cola
- Soaked
- _ scale; quake gauge
- Convent dweller
- Not shy about speaking up
- Ford or Close
- Edison's initials
- Gets closer to
- Dance at a bar mitzvah
- 747, for one
- Small beard
- Highest club
- Novice
- "_ Maria"
- Cheese-topped tortilla chips
- Actor's signal
- Ran away
- Church table
- Lynx or lion
- Capsules
- Beauty shop
- Olive Oyl's hairdo
- Fell fast asleep after a night of partying
- Football pass
- Gray wolf
- _ in; inserted
- Long story
- Sir Guinness
- Injured arm support
- Falling flakes
- Writing table
- Not relaxed
- Breakfast order

DOWN

- Swiss skier's milieu
- Yrbk. section



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

3/24/15

Monday's Puzzle Solved

EARTH	CLAD	SCAN
ALOHA	ROPE	CAFE
TEARS	ERRS	RITE
SCRUBBED	PRUNED	
SEAL	COOPERS	
RACHEL	TOTAL	
OUR	NEARS	DEALS
TRAP	DIETS	SHOP
SAGAS	LASER	ONE
SOWED	WASTED	
MUSTARD	VEIL	
ENTIRE	TERMINAL	
ADAM	ACHE	EVADE
LUGE	TOUR	NERDS
SEES	HOGS	TRYST

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3/24/15

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 36 "Wow!" | 51 _ in; wearing |
| 38 Sacred scroll | 52 Actor's part |
| 39 Kook | 53 Lincoln and Vigoda |
| 42 Ottoman | 54 Camera's eye |
| 44 Skill; dexterity | 55 Chimed |
| 46 Pamper | 56 Very eager |
| 47 _ off; delay | 57 Statutes |
| 49 Minimum | 60 Clamor |
| 50 Sheriff's star | |

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FIRE DEPT.	582-1108
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AMBULANCE	584-5050

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San Nicolas: San Lucas Tel: 584-5119

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24/7

American, Russian leave Earth this week for year in space

MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) —

What's one thing astronauts Scott Kelly of the U.S. and Mikhail Kornienko of Russia can't do without when they move into space this week for a year?

For Kelly, it's a belt. Kornienko must have his vitamins.

Kelly went beltless during his five-month mission at the International Space Station a few years back, and he hated how his shirttails kept floating out of his pants. So this time, the 51-year-old retired Navy captain packed "a military, tactical-style thing" that can hold a tool pouch.

For Kornienko, three bottles of vitamins will be on board when their Soyuz rocket blasts off from Kazakhstan on Saturday.

After more than two years of training, Kelly and Kornienko are eager to get going. It will be the longest space mission ever for NASA, and the longest in almost two decades for the Russian Space Agency, which holds the record at 14 months.

Medicine and technology have made huge leaps since then, and the world's space agencies need to know how the body adapts to an entire year of weightlessness before committing to even longer Mars expeditions. More yearlong missions are planned, with an ultimate goal of 12 test subjects. The typical station stint is six months.

"We know a lot about six months. But we know almost nothing about what happens between six and 12 months in space," said NASA's space station program scientist, Julie Robinson.

Among the more common space afflictions: weakened bones and

muscles, and impaired vision and immune system. Then there is the psychological toll.

Russian cosmonaut Gennady Padalka, a frequent flier who will accompany Kelly and Kornienko into orbit, predicts it will be the psychological — not physical — effects that will be toughest on the one-year crew.

"Being far away from Earth, be-

"If something happens ... you're not coming home, no matter what it is. You're not coming back," Kelly said in an interview earlier this year with The Associated Press.

Kelly's loved ones include: his two daughters, ages 20 and 11; his NASA-employed girlfriend; his widowed father; his identical twin brother Mark, a retired astronaut;

for a whole year. And she's still not happy about it, Kornienko told the AP.

"She understands that it's a dangerous mission. But she's getting used to the idea," he said.

A vivid reminder of the dangers of spaceflight hit home last fall when an unmanned supply ship blew up shortly after liftoff from Virginia. Kelly's original belt was destroyed, along with the rest of the station cargo. Replacements went up on the next commercial shipment.

The two veteran space fliers are fully aware of all the risks. Kelly has flown in space three times for a total of 180 days. (Two of those trips were space shuttle quickies.) Kornienko has a single 176-day station flight on his resume.

Kornienko was selected by his bosses for the job while Kelly volunteered.

At least Kelly will get outside for a spacewalk this time. Considerable work is needed to prepare the orbiting lab for the 2017 arrival of U.S. commercial crew capsules. Another plus is that Kelly and Kornienko seem to honestly like one another. And they won't be alone. There are normally six people on board and lots of compartments, including three full-scale laboratories, in which to disappear. Besides, the U.S. and Russian crews generally spend their workdays on their respective sides, Kelly noted. The total interior volume is roughly equivalent to two Boeing 747s.

Among those coming and going, in September, will be British soprano superstar Sarah Brightman. She will visit for 1½ weeks as a paying tourist, and will perform live from on high. □



In this Sept. 5, 2014 photo provided by NASA, cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko, left, of the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), and astronaut Scott Kelly stand together for a picture at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, Russia.

Associated Press

ing sort of cramped, having few people to interact with," Padalka said. He'll break the record for most time spent in space during his six-month stay, closing in on a grand total of 900 days by the time he returns to Earth in September.

Neither Kelly nor Kornienko, though, worries about himself. They fret about the family and friends they are leaving behind for an entire year — until next March.

and his sister-in-law, Gabrielle Giffords, a former congresswoman who barely survived an assassination attempt while he was at the space station in 2011.

Kornienko, 54, a former paratrooper, worries how his wife will cope alone at their country house outside Moscow. His 32-year-old daughter is a new mother; the baby is not quite a year old.

Wife Irina cried when she learned in 2012 that he'd be leaving Earth

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In this Feb. 15, 2015 file photo, singer Taylor Swift attends the SNL 40th Anniversary Special in New York.

Associated Press

Taylor Swift, Microsoft among those buying up .porn suffixes

NEW YORK (AP) — The singer Taylor Swift, Microsoft Corp. Harvard University are among those buying up .porn and .adult Web suffixes as a pre-emptive move before those domain names become available this summer.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, is making Internet address suffixes beyond the usual .com or .org available for people and businesses to use. While some are in Chinese or other languages be-

sides English, others could include the likes of .music, .app or, of course, .porn.

To check what brands, groups and celebrities have bought their domain names, visit <http://icmregistry.com/domaincheck>. According to the site, Microsoft has bought not only Microsoft.porn but Office.porn and Office.adult as well.

Representatives for Taylor Swift, Microsoft and Harvard could not immediately be reached for comment. □

Kerry Washington, Roland Emmerich among GLAAD honorees

MIKE CIDONI LENNOX
AP Entertainment Writer
BEVERLY HILLS, California

(AP) — Actress Kerry Washington, director Roland Emmerich, the film "The Imitation Game" and television shows "Transparent" and "How to Get Away With Murder" have received stamps of approval from a leading advocacy group for gays in the media.

GLAAD is a U.S.-based group that promotes lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender presence in the media, and celebrated its honorees at a ceremony here Saturday night.

GLAAD president and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis said "Scandal" star Washington was chosen by the group because, "She's done quite a bit for the LGBT community and she's a phenomenal spokeswoman for us. And she's got our back. And she always has."

In Washington's acceptance speech, the actress reminded the audience, "In 1997, when Ellen (DeGeneres) made her famous declaration, it took place in an America where the Defense of Marriage Act had just passed months earlier, and civil unions were not legal in any state. But also



Kerry Washington arrives at the 26th Annual GLAAD Media Awards held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Saturday, March 21, 2015, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

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remember that just 30 years before that, the Supreme Court was deciding that the ban against interracial marriage was unconstitutional.

"Up until then, heterosexual people of different races couldn't marry who they wanted to marry either. So, when black people today say that they don't believe in gay marriage ... the first thing that I say is, 'Please don't let anybody try to get you to vote against your own best interest by feeding you messages of hate.' And then I say, 'People used to say things about that about you and your love.'"

The German Emmerich is perhaps best known for

producing and directing the 1996 blockbuster "Independence Day," as well as the 1998 remake of "Godzilla" and 2004's "The Day After Tomorrow." Now openly gay, Emmerich said he long kept his homosexuality private because he didn't want to be limited to making only films with gay stories, as had happened with other directors in Germany. Emmerich's gay-themed historical drama "Stone-wall" will be released later this year. And Emmerich said "Independence Day 2," due next year, will feature an openly gay character.

More GLAAD awards will be handed out at a ceremony in New York May 9. □

Selfie spot for 'Mad Men' fans: new Don Draper bench in NYC

BETH J. HARPAZ
AP Travel Editor

NEW YORK (AP) — "Mad Men" fans can now take a selfie with Don Draper, thanks to a bench unveiled Monday featuring the fictional adman's silhouette.

Jon Hamm, the actor who plays Draper, posed for photos on the bench outside the Time & Life Building at 1271 Avenue of the Americas in midtown Manhattan. He appeared with other cast members, January Jones, Christina Hendricks, John Slattery and Elisabeth Moss, along with the show's creator, Matthew Weiner.

The bench is one of a number of attractions around New York City coinciding with the AMC series' final season, which begins April 5. The Museum of the Moving Image in Queens has a "Mad Men" exhibit with props, sets and costumes. Some restaurants are offering \$19.69 liquid lunches this week



Christina Hendricks, from left, January Jones and Jon Hamm appear at an unveiling of a bench dedicated to the "Mad Men" series in front of the Time & Life Building on Monday, March 23, 2015 in New York.

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in honor of the show. And Moss, who plays Peggy on the show, has gotten rave reviews as the star of the Broadway revival of "The Heidi Chronicles." The Draper bench shows a black

outline of the character seated on the bench, with one arm draped along the back of the seat. Two slim strips of white illuminate the black figure: a shirt cuff peeking out from beneath a suit sleeve, and the tip of a cigarette.

The street signs at the corner of Sixth Avenue and 50th Street were changed to read "Mad Men Av" and "Don Draper Way."

The Time & Life Building is where the fictional ad agency in the show is headquartered. Although the series, which is set in the 1960s, takes place in New York, it's mostly filmed in Los Angeles on Hollywood sets. But there are numerous references in the show to real places in New York along with real events from that turbulent decade. No doubt the weather for Monday's event was a chilling reality check for the stars: It was 28 degrees and Moss was wearing open-toed shoes. □

How 3 Broadway novices wrote 'Something Rotten!'

MARK KENNEDY

AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — It began with an intriguing premise for a musical: What would it have been like to be a fledgling playwright making a living at the same time as William Shakespeare?

The result is "Something Rotten!" and all it took to get to Broadway was that original idea plus 40-odd songs, endless rewriting, a brief scare from an Oscar-winning movie, some top-notch actors and some two decades.

"It's easy," joked Karey Kirkpatrick, who co-wrote the songs with his brother, Wayne, and co-wrote the story with John O'Farrell, all of whom are making their Broadway debuts this month. "A piece of cake." The comedy is set during the Renaissance and portrays Shakespeare as an arrogant, rock star playwright. Two brothers desperate to write a hit show in his shadow stumble on the notion of writing the world's first musical.

Karey and Wayne Kirkpatrick dreamed up the initial idea in the mid-1990s. They'd both adored musical theater growing up in

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, before carving out their own careers.

Wayne Kirkpatrick is a Grammy Award-winning songwriter of such tunes as "Change the World" for Eric Clapton and "Wrapped Up In You" by Garth Brooks. His brother is a screenwriter who helped write such films as "Chicken Run," "James and the Giant Peach" and "Over the Hedge."

A musical set in 1595 England was an idea they kicked around whenever the brothers got together. Some of their original jokes included having playwrights back then represented by William & Morris and the law firm of Rosen, Crantz and Guildenstern.

"We would go, 'That would be funny. We should write that someday,'" said Karey Kirkpatrick. "Then we would go back to our own careers. And then we'd get back together and go, 'Hey, I thought of something else. What if ...'"

"That went on for about 15 years," Wayne Kirkpatrick said.

O'Farrell, a British author and commentator known for the books "The Man Who Forgot His Wife" and "The Best a Man Can Get,"

joined the effort after he and Karey Kirkpatrick bonded while working on "Chicken Run."

"His books have just the right amount of humor and heart. So I knew the sensibilities would align,"



In this Tuesday, March 3, 2015, photo, Karey Kirkpatrick, center, is flanked by his brother, Wayne Kirkpatrick, left, and John O'Farrell outside the St. James Theatre in New York.

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said Karey Kirkpatrick. He told his brother: "You'll like John. He's one of us."

Work on the show was fitful and then threatened by the release of "Shakespeare in Love," the 1998 film with Gwyneth Paltrow that portrayed a young Shakespeare stealing many of his best lines. The fledgling musical writers decided to keep going, mindful that any overlap

would have to be cut.

In 2010, Karey Kirkpatrick got in touch with an old pal, Kevin McCollum, a Tony-winning producer whose Broadway credits include "The Drowsy Chaperone" and "Rent."

(They had both worked at Disneyland years ago). Kirkpatrick wanted to know how to pitch a musical. McCollum told him "Avenue Q," one of his hits, began as just an idea and three songs when it was first introduced.

At a pitch meeting later that year, the brothers, after dinner with McCollum in which they explained their idea, sat down with him in

Karey Kirkpatrick's 10-foot-by-10-foot Los Angeles studio and played him five songs and handed him a treatment.

"He went away and read and came back and said, 'I think you've got something here,'" said Karey Kirkpatrick. O'Farrell added: "It happened to be the producer who is the most open to new ideas and the greatest developer of new material. We got incredibly lucky."

Work on the musical began in earnest in February 2011 when all three men spent a week in an apartment in New York hammering out the story.

Things went even faster when McCollum asked Tony-winning director and choreographer Casey Nicholaw to weigh in. He, in turn, reached out to top-notch talent.

"That's what happens when you have Kevin and Casey," said Karey Kirkpatrick. "We'd do a table-read and Casey would say, 'I'm just going to get a few of my friends together and we'll read it.' And you show up and it's 'Tony-winner!' 'Tony-winner!' 'Oh, hi, I've seen you.' 'And I've seen you!'" □



In this Dec. 10, 1965 file photo, the comedy team of Marty Allen, left, and Steve Rossi, now making their first film on the Paramount lot in Los Angeles.

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LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — On his 93rd birthday, comedian Marty Allen could easily

rest on his laughs.

Instead, Allen was marking Monday's milestone onstage at a Las Vegas hotel with his wife, singer Karon

Comic Marty Allen marks 93rd birthday with laughs, songs

Kate Blackwell. The act includes her songs, his comedy, and photos and anecdotes about the celebrities that Allen has worked or brushed shoulders with over the years.

"I lived in a time of superstars that will never come again," said Allen, who opened for singers that included Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Sarah Vaughn and Tony Bennett, just to name a few.

Allen also enjoyed success solo and with singer Steve Rossi as a music-comedy team. It was during one of their appearances that Allen came up with his "Hello Dere!" catchphrase, which became as familiar to fans as his wild mop of hair.

His career started modestly in his native Pittsburgh, Al-

len recalled.

"I came up the hard way. I played little clubs, little bars. Anywhere three or four people came in and had a meeting, I did my comedy," he said.

Among the highlights: repeated appearances on "The Ed Sullivan Show," including the 1964 episode with The Beatles; opening for Sinatra at the Sands hotel in Las Vegas; and meeting and ribbing stars including Elvis Presley and Richard Burton. "Stop stealing my act," Allen told the young Presley. When Burton asked if Allen, whose credits include TV series, game shows and movies, had ever considered doing Shakespeare, the comic's comeback: "I don't do old material." He's proud that

he always worked "clean" and stayed away from insult humor, which he says isn't in his nature. His self-published autobiography, "Hello Dere!" reflects that: He has only nice things to say about fellow entertainers and others. The book recounts his World War II service, which included a Soldier's Medal for valor, and his marriage to his first wife, Lorraine "Frenchy" Allen, who died in 1976. He and Blackwell married in 1984 and appear regularly onstage. Allen credits his longevity to his attitude — "I enjoy life" — and his work. "I think the fact I can make people laugh and entertain them, maybe that helps me feel good and keep going," he said. □

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